The African Communist

NO 81 SECOND QUARTER 1980

YEAR OF

The Freedom Charter

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim author on the will of all the people;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founde inequality;

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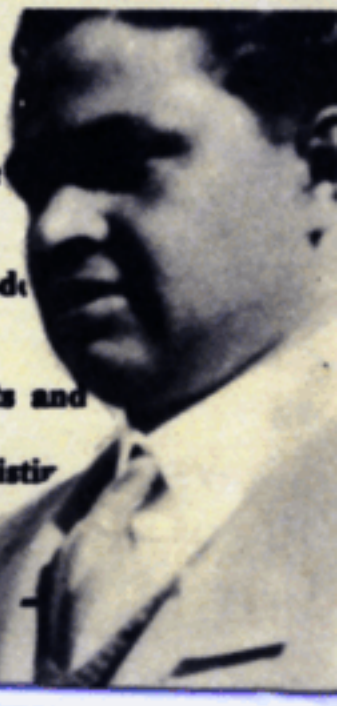

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SPOTLIGHT ON AFGHANISTAN

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THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS — IMPERIALIST THREAT TO PEACE AND SOCIALISM

President Carter has de ribed the Afghanistan crisis as the worst threat to world peace since the se: ond world war. This is certainly what he tried to turn it into. Seldom have we seen anti-Soviet hysteria whipped up to such a fever pitch, with economic and other sanctions imposed by the United States and some other imperialist countries, cultural links broken, threats of world war bandied about, new military alliances formed, appropriations for rearmament increased, military, air and naval bases

established, the Olympic Games threatened, and even a suggestion made by one British Conservative MP that the United States be invited to "retake" Cuba (*Times* January 17) — at least an unconscious admission that Batista's Cuba was nothing more than a United States colony. The anti-Soviet propaganda campaign conducted by the imperialist media has been shameless and unbridled, with rumours, lies and distortions piled recklessly on top of one another. The public in the imperialist countries was being prepared for ever-escalating confrontation, with the danger looming larger day by day that incident piled on incident could lead to an intensification of international friction and ultimately the outbreak of nuclear war.

Yes, the situation confronting the world at the beginning of this year was the worst threat to peace since the second world war. But who was making the threats? Who was responsible for the tumult and the fury which was unleashed? What had the Soviet Union done to warrant the ferocious attack which was launched against her? The imperialists allege that the Soviet Union "invaded" Afghanistan, and was engaged in the suppression of the rights of an independent nation. But what are the facts?

The first announcement of the coup was made on Radio Kabul at 7.45pm on the evening of December 27, which said that the dictatorial regime of Hafizullah Amin had been overthrown and Mr Babrak Karmal had been appointed as Prime Minister by the Revolutionary Council, the legitimate successor of the revolution of April 1978. Kabul Radio also announced that Amin had been found guilty of crimes against the Afghan people and had been executed by sentence of the revolutionary court. Despite every attempt by the imperialists, no evidence has been forthcoming to show that the Soviet Union had any hand in either the coup or the execution. *The Times* of December 28 reported:

"In spite of the unusually speedy announcement, there is no evidence that the Soviet Union engineered the reported coup against President Amin but it can only be pleased with his overthrow".

On December 28 Radio Kabul transmitted a statement by the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan that in view of the continuing and broadening interference and provocations of external enemies of Afghanistan and with a view to defending the gains of the April Revolution, it had approached the Soviet Union with the "insistent request that it give urgent political, moral and economic aid, including military aid", in terms of the treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness and co-operation signed between the two countries on December 5, 1978. (At that

time the President of Afghanistan was Mohammed Taraki, who became head of state after the April 1978 revolution which overthrew the feudal regime of President Daoud. President Taraki was later to be assassinated by Amin in a palace shoot-out on September 14, 1979).

Article IV of the Soviet-Afghan Treaty reads:

"Acting in the spirit of the traditions of friendship and good neighbourliness, as well as the United Nations Charter, the parties to the treaty will be consulting each other and with mutual consent will be taking appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence and territorial integrity of both countries. In the interests of reinforcing defence potentials of the parties, they will continue developing co-operation in the military sphere".

The Afghan government announced that "the government of the Soviet Union has met the request of the Afghan side."

This development, however one may regret the need for it, is certainly not unlawful. Yet on January 2 the London *Times,* totally ignoring its own report of a few days earlier (December 28 reproduced above) now set the tone for what was to come:

"The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has rung alarm bells in the capitals of NATO, Pakistan, Indian, China, Iran and many other countries . . . The Soviet Union has committed an act of unprovoked aggression against a sovereign country outside its own alliance"

Where is the Evidence?

If the Soviet presence in Afghanistan constituted an "invasion", where is the evidence of the opposition of the "oppressed" nation? The Afghan government was co-operating everywhere with the Soviet Union, and despite frantic attempts to uncover areas of conflict, the foreign pressmen who swarmed all over Afghanistan in the wake of the "invasion" could produce no evidence of clashes or disagreement between the Soviet and Afghan forces. There was no Afghan "government" underground, no Afghan "government" in exile (though it would not be beyond the capacity of the imperialists to concoct one). On January 9 the *Times* correspondent in Kabul, who was able to move about the country pretty freely, admitted in some astonishment:

"It is clear that the Afghan army — far from rebelling en masse against the Russians as opposition sources in Peshawar have been claiming — are for the most part assisting the Soviet forces".

Fisk reported that "such fighting that still goes on appears to be centred on Jalalabad" though he confessed "it is impossible to know where the weight of Russian armour is concentrated". But on January 13 Philip Jacobson, reporting in the *Observer* from inside Afghanistan noted:

"There is a large military hospital at Jalalabad, but nobody in the city has seen any Russian casualties. It is, in fact, difficult to find anyone in Jalalabad itself who has laid eyes on a single Russian soldier dead or alive. They have never left the base since their arrival, it appears . . . A few minutes in the teeming bazaars is enough to establish that earlier reports of stern fighting inside Jalalabad, of heavy casualties and a terrified population were rubbish. Not a shot has been fired yet to disrupt the serious business of making money . . . There is nothing to support insurgent claims that the Russians have completely disarmed the Afghan army in the area around Jalalabad. Afghan troops with AK-47 rifles are on duty — if that is the right phrase for dozing on a chair in the sun — at bridges, strategic crossroads and petrol stations".

Ian Mather reported from Kabul in *The Observer* on January 20:

"Stories from rebel sources of major clashes producing heavy Russian casualties appear to range from the exaggerated to the fictitious. On a road journey from Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan to Kabul I saw little evidence of fighting apart from isolated sniping. The American Embassy here, too, has been feeding wildly inaccurate information to American journalists, exaggerating the numbers of Russian troops in the country, the number of Russians killed and the extent of engagements".

Nearly one month after the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in response to the government's request, the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* Kenneth Clarke reported from Kabul (January 22, 1980):

"From the Pakistan border to Kabul, Afghanistan was yesterday a land apparently at peace. The fierce fighting, helicopter gunships, bands of guerrillas in the mountains, of which certain sources have spoken so convincingly, were not in evidence. Nor were the columns of fleeing refugees . . . The departure of American journalists has been accompanied by a sharp drop in the stories of armed clashes and murderous incidents, usually attributed to 'diplomatic sources' ".

So the whole story of the "invasion" and "suppression" of Afghanistan turns out to be nothing more than an American propaganda plot, part of a continuing conspiracy against detente. On the basis of lies, slanders and falsehoods the imperialists have tried to incite the world against the Soviet Union and the forces of genuine democracy and socialism, even at the risk

of war. Of course, this is nothing new. It has been going on ever since the October revolution of 1917, when capitalism's grip on the world was first broken. From that time to the present, the imperialists have been fighting desperately to save the rest of their empire from destruction by the forces of social change, and their desperation has increased as the tide of liberty has surged ever higher against their remaining bastions. Who threatens peace in the world today? It is not the Soviet Union but the United States which has established its military bases, missile bunkers and other forms of armed presence in other countries on a global scale. The US maintains 423 permanent military bases abroad, and 3,000 supplementary installations in 30 countries. One of its main bases is on the island of Cuba itself, against the will of the government and people of that country. Since the end of World War 2, the US has undertaken 215 military actions involving the use or threat of force against other countries.

What we are witnessing today is not an act of Soviet aggression against a neighbouring country, but a world-wide campaign by the forces of reaction, which today include the clique who rule China, directed against the Soviet Union which has forced the Soviet government to take action to defend the interests of socialism.

The Afghan Revolution

The revolution which took place in Afghanistan in April 1978 overthrew a government of feudal despotism and opened the road to people's democracy. In his first speech on Kabul Radio after taking office as Prime Minister, Babrak Karmal stressed that the objectives of the revolutionary council were not to introduce socialism, for which the basis did not yet exist because of the backwardness of the country, but to strengthen the social and political foundations of Afghanistan and ultimately secure the victory of the anti-feudal, democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-exploiting forces. The new government, Karmal said, would strive to end poverty, disease, backwardness, illiteracy and ignorance, unemployment and national and social oppression.

After April 1978 one of the first acts of the Revolutionary Council was to decree agrarian reform, a measure of the utmost importance in a country where 80 per cent of the population worked a bare 8 per cent of the land and most of them were in debt and thrall to the landowners. Afghanistan had almost no industry, and the working class could be numbered in hundreds. Nevertheless, there was widespread unemployment, although

the extent of this could not be measured because of the lack of statistical and social services. 90 per cent of the population could neither read nor write and women were treated as inferiors and items of personal property.

99 per cent of the population of Afghanistan is Muslim. At the very outset the Revolutionary Council announced that its programme was based on the principles of Islam, yet in the course of implementing it the government found itself in conflict with the reactionary Muslim hierarchy and the landowners. The very progress of the revolution increased the opposition from these circles. Within one year of the April 1978 revolution, two universities and 500 schools had been opened, the eradication of illiteracy had been got under way, national groups had won the right to be taught in their own language. The rights of women had been recognised. The debts of 11 million landless peasants had been liquidated, 300,000 hectares of land had been distributed in 140,000 peasant holdings, about 1,000 landworking and credit co-operatives had been set up by 90,000 other peasant families already settled, and 2,000 mutual aid funds, helped by the government and with a membership of some 500,000 peasant families, were at work. Peasant committees had been formed all over the country to run local affairs and defend the revolution.

Workers had for the first time built up a genuine trade union movement. A five-year-plan for the development of national resources (especially oil and other minerals), ending unemployment and raising living standards had been launched. 71 major economic and cultural enterprises provided for under Soviet-Afghan agreements in terms of the plan were already working. The first steps had been taken towards industrial development.

Hundreds of families of refugees who had fled the country under the influence of the propaganda by the mullahs and tribal chiefs who act as agents of the rebel organisations because they "command the funds, arms and ammunition sources" (*Daily Telegraph,* October 2, 1979), began to return home, encouraged by the reforms and aided by the government. Meanwhile, the big feudal landowners, their military collaborators and the village money-lenders who were the chief beneficiaries of the old regime were chased out of the country and formed the focus of rebellion and intervention.

Social progress in any country at the expense of "private enterprise" would have aroused the opposition of the imperialists, but in a sensitive area like Afghanistan, bordered by Iran, Pakistan and China as well as the

Soviet Union, the imperialists responded by assisting and instigating the forces of counter-revolution, determined to halt the spread of socialism and to convert Afghanistan into a springboard for action against the Soviet Union itself. Murderous bands of gangsters were dignified with the name of "opposition" and "resistance", and the imperialists and Chinese acted together to destabilise the Afghan revolution and restore the feudalists to power.

There is abundant proof of external intervention by the imperialists, Chinese, Pakistan and others after the April revolution. As early as February 2, 1979, the *Washington Post* correspondent described the training of guerrillas in Pakistan "to oust the Afghan government". During the year repeated efforts were made to destabilise the new regime, and press reports became more frequent. Here are some examples:

"Pakistan has received the backing of China and the United States. The Afghan rebels have been trained and armed inside Pakistan, and no reprisals made by Moscow". (*Christian Science Monitor,* August 9, 1979.)

"In Peshawar (Pakistan) it is possible to meet some of the leaders of the Afghan rebels". (*Observer,* November 11, 1979.)

"A short distance from Peshawar, on the road that runs west to the Khyber Pass and Afghanistan, stands a modest house guarded by two Afghan tribesmen . . . The house is the headquarters of the Afghanistan National Liberation Front, which its leaders say is dedicated to . . . establishing a fundamentalist Islamic state. The ANLF is not the only insurgent group with headquarters in Peshawar . . . There have been numerous alliances in the past year involving leaders of the six exile groups in Peshawar." (*Times,* November 20, 1979).

On December 30, 1979, a *Times* message from the Pakistan capital of Islamabad admitted that the raiders received funds "from supporters in the Gulf States, and other Arab countries".

"Reports from Pakistan suggest that China is arming resistance groups in Afghanistan, presumably with Pakistani complicity". (*Daily Telegraph,* January 5, 1980.)

"Early last year, when the guerrilla campaign was in its infancy, regular units of the Pakistani armed forces took part in cross-border raids. From that time other opponents of the Afghan government supplied material aid to the rebels: Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait provided financial aid, and China, a long-term military ally of Pakistan's, provided arms to the guerrillas as well as sending instructors to Afghan rebel bases at Miranshah and Chitral". (Fred Halliday in *Labour Weekly,* January 11, 1980.)

Friends of Imperialism

And who are these "rebels" in whose interests the imperialists are now threatening to torpedo detente and even wage war? "Tribal rebels in the eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan are leaderless and bitterly divided and fight mainly for loot, according to a British television cameraman who spent nearly four months with them . . . Mr Downey, a former soldier, who has filmed insurgencies in Eritrea, the Western Sahara, Rhodesia and Kurdistan, said in Pakistan yesterday that the rebellion in Afghanistan was the most disorganised he had experienced . . . Captured weapons were usually sold, and soldiers who defected to the rebel side were often robbed of their weapons and left to fend for themselves". Downey added that the rebels were "fighting mainly to preserve their feudal status quo and stop the Kabul Government's left-wing reforms, which were considered anti-Islamic" and that they received funds from supporters in the Gulf States and other Arab countries. (*Daily Telegraph* December 31, 1979.)

These bandits have now become "freedom fighters". The "freedom" which the United States claims to be defending in Afghanistan is the freedom of the landowners and feudal tyrants to continue their exploitation of the mass of the Afghan people, who have been the victims of their reactionary rule for so many centuries, and whose domination was ended by the April 1978 revolution. The Soviet action, by contrast, has been to assist, at the request of the Afghan government, in the process of liberating the Afghan people from serfdom, specifically by guarding the country from the external intervention which was taking place.

And what an array of "freedom lovers" and "democrats" the United States is whipping into line to support its actions against the Soviet Union! Like the butcher Zia of Pakistan, who came to power by means of a military coup, brutally put to death his political opponent Bhutto, and has refused to submit his regime to the test of popular elections. Like the feudal rulers of Saudi Arabia and Oman, who keep their people in subjection, ignorance and poverty, and spend their oil wealth on personal ostentation and luxury; like the government of Turkey, whose unprovoked invasion and occupation of Cyprus is passed over in silence; like the clique who rule China, whose occupation of Tibet has been forgotten, which has seized land from India and Vietnam, and whose brutal invasion of Vietnam to "teach the Vietnamese a lesson" was accepted by the west with indulgence; like the fascist Pinochet, the murderer of President Allende and Chilean democracy, with whom Mrs Thatcher resumed diplomatic relations at the height of the Afghanistan crisis; like all the

tyrannical regimes of Latin America which rule by the sword and are propped up by the American dollar.

Nor can one overlook the crimes against peace and humanity perpetrated by the United States itself in the period since the end of the second world war, including the physical suppression of left-wing movements and governments in Central America, the invasion of the Bay of Pigs and the various attempts to assassinate President Castro, the horrendous assaults on the peoples of Korea and Vietnam, the bolstering of the regime of the Shah of Iran for which the Iranian people are now demanding retribution . . . and the list can be extended almost indefinitely. Everywhere America is to be found on the side of reaction and against the forces of liberation, though everywhere she claims to be defending "freedom" and "democracy". Thus what has happened in Afghanistan cannot be isolated from the events in Iran and elsewhere in the world where imperialism has suffered severe setbacks during the past decade.

The expulsion of the American forces from Vietnam was a major turning point in world history, demonstrating the invincible power of the liberation forces aided by the might of the international communist movement and world progressive forces. Paralysed by world hostility to their aggression against Vietnam — a hostility which affected large sections of the American people themselves — the imperialists found themselves unable to hold back the revolutionary tide which led to the destruction of the Portuguese empire; the establishment of socialist-oriented regimes in Mozambique and Angola; the overthrow of the Emperor of Abyssinia and the coming to power of the revolutionary regime headed by Mengistu; the Iranian revolution which ousted the Shah; the toppling of the dictatorial regime of Somoza in Nicaragua; the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Yemen; and the general upsurge of the popular forces in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America which threatened to end the hegemony of imperialism on a world scale.

War Psychosis

For some years now United States policy has been deliberately aimed at creating a climate of opinion in the west which would make it possible to commit American forces to direct action in defence of the interests of imperialism — for nothing less is regarded as adequate to prevent the

collapse of the capitalist system and the triumph of socialism the world over. In his January "state of the nation" message President Carter stressed his aim was to maintain the supremacy of the United States as "the strongest nation on earth". And all his efforts in recent months have been directed towards restoring the "cordon sanitaire" round the Soviet Union which was destroyed by the revolutions in Iran and Afghanistan. Soviet peace initiatives have been derided, her proposals for disarmament ignored, the ratification of SALT 2 deferred, American military forces dispatched to the middle East, new bases established in the Indian Ocean area, a NATO decision taken to deploy 600 new atomic weapons in Western Europe, military links forged with China.

Step by step the imperialists have mounted a massive propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union, which they rightly regard as the main bastion of the world-wide anti-imperialist forces. Every possible issue is magnified out of all proportion to whip up anti-Soviet feelings and justify further preparations for war.

Carter started off his presidential career with a crusade over "human rights" which was specifically directed against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The prosecution of law-breakers in the socialist countries, dignified with the name of "dissidents" in the western media, are the occasion for unbridled tirades against the socialist regimes and threats of retaliatory action to "punish" them. Meanwhile, the atrocities perpetrated by the imperialist countries themselves, and by the tyrants propped up by the imperialists, are passed over in silence. An artificial hullabaloo over the presence of Soviet military instructors in Cuba last year was the occasion for further threats and war propaganda, reviving memories of the 1962 crisis which led the world to the brink of war. In his 1980 state of the nation message Carter threatened military action to defend America's interests in the Middle East, making clear that American military supremacy and domination over the resources of other countries was the object of the exercise — certainly not the human rights of the oppressed and impoverished peoples of the region.

To those who have expressed doubt whether the Soviet assistance to Afghanistan was worth the trouble it has caused, it should be pointed out that the "trouble" started long before, not after, the events of December 27/28. Soviet action in Afghanistan was a response to provocation and aggression. As President Brezhnev said in an interview with *Pravda* on January 12:

"The events in Afghanistan are not the true cause of the present

complication of the international situation. If there were no Afghanistan, certain circles in the United States and in NATO would have surely found another pretext to aggravate the situation in the world".

President Brezhnev stressed that the Soviet Union was merely carrying out its treaty and internationalist obligations to prevent Afghanistan falling a prey to imperialism and allowing the aggressive forces "to repeat in that country what they had succeeded in doing, for example, in Chile, where the people's freedom was drowned in blood".

Economic Crisis

All these events must be seen against the background of the collapse of the economies of the imperialist countries, where living standards are undermined by ever-rising inflation and widespread unemployment. The lunatic hysteria over the price of gold is a measure of the desperation which haunts big business in the imperialist countries and the widespread lack of confidence in their ability to make the capitalist system work. In the United States corporate profits have more than tripled in the last 10 years during a period when the rate of growth of production and wages has been stagnant. Officially inflation in January had topped the 13% mark – the highest in US history – but measured by the yardstick of food, clothing, housing, transport and medical care the true rate of US inflation is over 18%, and rising. The real wages of US workers were the same in 1979 as they were 15 years previously. The Johannesburg *Financial Mail* reported on January 11 that the US growth of national income per person employed declined from 2.6% a year in 1948-73 to minus 0.6% in 1973-76. Between 1953 and 1978 the US public debt increased by 736,000 million dollars and exceeded 1,000,000 million dollars. In Britain unemployment in January had reached the highest point for six years and the Thatcher government was engaged in a deliberate and heartless campaign to lower living standards, cut social services and smash the power of the trade unions.

Classically in such situations, capitalist countries seek a way out of their dilemma by means of increased expenditure on armaments and preparations for war. Well before Afghanistan both the United States and Britain had announced vastly increased defence budgets, and it was in the wake of the Iran revolution that the United States first began to deploy its military forces in the Gulf Area, the Middle East, East Africa and the Indian Ocean. It is not unreasonable to speculate that it was only the capture of the American hostages at the US embassy which prevented

direct US military intervention in Iran.

Times columnist Patrick Brogan wrote on January 17:

"The revolution in Iran is clearly the greatest defeat for American foreign policy since the fall of Saigon in 1975. Indeed, its consequences may be much more serious. It may take a war to save the Middle East from Communism, which is a prospect grim enough to daunt anyone. We will see soon enough whether President Carter will face that prospect and whether the American people will follow him".

As though in response to this challenge, President Carter announced a few days later the reintroduction of registration for young people (both men and, for the first time, women) as a first step towards the restoration of conscription, and the politicians of the main bourgeois parties and the kept scribes of the media are making frantic and shameless efforts to brainwash the American people into accepting the inevitability of further confrontations. Throughout the capitalist world, in fact, the right wing forces are on the offensive and the danger of war as the international class struggle moves towards its resolution should not be minimised. With China as their ally, they threaten the Soviet Union on two fronts and feel ready for any adventure.

In these circumstances it is the duty of progressive forces everywhere to place proletarian internationalism at the head of their agenda, to take their stand by the side of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries who are defending the road to the new world which was outlined in the Communist Manifesto, to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, to mobilise the peoples of the world for peace, to prevent the outbreak of a war which would lead to the destruction of humanity. This is not the time for equivocation and doubt, but for reaffirmation, resolution and determination, for demonstrating in a time of crisis that we know how to distinguish our friends from our enemies. This is a time for mobilisation and action to ensure that the cause of the Soviet Union, socialism, national liberation and peace triumphs over all opposition.

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TRANSFER OF POWER IN ZIMBABWE

What the situation will be in Rhodesia by the time these words appear in print is uncertain. But the proceedings at the Lancaster House conference from September to December 1979, and the conduct of the governor Lord Soames from the time of his arrival in the territory have made certain issues clear.

1. Britain, South Africa, the Rhodesian Front and black reactionaries worked steadily for a neo-colonialist solution which would leave political and economic power firmly in the hands of the racists.

2. The only force capable of rolling back the cohorts of racism and imperialism is a united front for the national democratic revolution, backed by the world-wide progressive forces.

Despite their fears, mutterings and grumblings, the racists and imperialists were well satisfied with the Lancaster House conference and its aftermath. The Lusaka Commonwealth conference which opened the way to the Lancaster House talks had already broken the united stand which was achieved at the preceding Monrovia conference of the Organisation of African Unity. The Lusaka conference breached the unity of the independent African states and revealed the economic and military pressures which were being applied to the front-line states. The Southern African racists, with the connivance of western imperialism, having failed to destroy the forces of the Patriotic Front in battle, were now deliberately engaged in acts of military and economic aggression against the front line states where the Patriotic Front was headquartered. In our view it is no coincidence that it was precisely during the period of the Lancaster House conference that South Africa exploded its first nuclear device, making clear the nature of the threat which was being presented not only to the front-line states but to the whole of independent Africa.

It was in these circumstances that the Patriotic Front was compelled to accept the ceasefire terms agreed upon at Lancaster House — terms which placed them at a serious disadvantage in the run-up to the election scheduled for February. Britain posed as the honest broker at the Lancaster House talks, yet in fact Lord Carrington behaved throughout as though he was dictating surrender terms to a defeated Patriotic Front and presented each item as an ultimatum with a deadline attached so that any breakdown in the talks could be blamed on PF intransigence. It is immensely to the credit of the PF that with skill and patience it resisted this provocation and succeeded in extracting from the British a series of

concessions which represented gains for the PF and the oppressed black peoples of Zimbabwe whom it represented and for whom its armed forces had fought and died. By contrast, the other teams at the talks meekly accepted every British proposal, raised no objections and took almost no part in the proceedings, making it plain that they were acting merely as instruments of the racists and imperialists. Noteworthy also is the fact that South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha took part in negotiations with Carrington and Thatcher during the Lancaster House talks, laying down the parameters within which South Africa was prepared to co-operate in the implementation of the agreement.

The governorship of Soames was characterised by partiality towards the racists and their puppets and hostility towards the Patriotic Front, whose members and supporters were placed at a severe disadvantage. While the armed forces of ZAPU and ZANU were confined to assembly points, the Rhodesian security forces were repeatedly called upon by Soames to take action, and the Muzorewa auxiliaries were given a free hand to roam the country and terrorise the population. Robert Mugabe was forced to release 70 prisoners in Mozambique before he was allowed to return to Rhodesia, but up to that time no attempt had been made by Soames to release the 5,000 martial law detainees and the 6,000 political prisoners, many of them convicted by the special martial law tribunals. All of these prisoners were Patriotic Front supporters, and all were partially or totally immobilised through most of the election campaign. Further discrimination against the PF was manifested over the repatriation of 300,000 refugees in the front-line states, all of them PF supporters. The transport arrangements meant that the bulk of these refugees could not return to Rhodesia in time to take part in the election, while at the same time no attempt was made to allow them to vote in their exile camps.

Above all, Soames took no effective action to expel the South African forces from Rhodesia. During the Lancaster House conference, Lord Carrington gave the Patriotic Front the explicit assurance "that there would be no external involvement in Rhodesia under a British governor. The position has been made clear to all the governments concerned, including South Africa". This statement (subsequently endorsed in the Commons by Sir Ian Gilmour) was made on December 5, before the end of the conference, and was issued to the press at the time as "Supplement to Annexe E" of the final agreement, yet was not included in the formal report on the Lancaster House negotiations later issued by the Foreign Office.

That this indicated bad faith on the part of the British was proved when Soames stated, after taking over as Governor of Rhodesia, that South African troops were stationed at Beit Bridge with his full permission — a flagrant breach of the Lancaster House agreement and of Gilmour's undertaking in the Commons. Yet when taxed on this point Gilmour told the Commons on January 16:

"I cannot accept that the presence just across the border of a small contingent of South African troops can be said to be a foreign involvement in Rhodesia".

Coming at a time when the western world was screaming protests at the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, and in the wake of South African declarations threatening an invasion of Rhodesia, this astonishing display of hypocrisy evoked anger and violent protests, not only from the Patriotic Front, but also from the front-line states, the OAU and progressive forces throughout the world, and was ultimately raised in the Security Council, which unanimously called on Britain to adhere scrupulously to the Lancaster House agreement.

Soames was eventually obliged to announce that the South Africans would be replaced by Rhodesian security forces, but this did not take place until the end of January. And once again Soames turned to the Rhodesian security forces and not to the Patriotic Front for the maintenance of "security" and "law and order". Not once did he call on the forces of the Patriotic Front.

The withdrawal of South African forces from Beit Bridge left untouched the position of thousands of other South African forces in Rhodesia, estimated by the Patriotic Front to number at least 6,000, who were either serving in the Rhodesian security forces or operating as independent units in various parts of the country. At his first press after returning to Salisbury, Robert Mugabe said there was a battery of South African artillery situated facing the Zambian border, that South African patrols were operating along the border with Mozambique and that other South African units were based at Buffalo Range in the south. South Africans had also been reported to be acting as helicopter pilots during the ceasefire period, engaged in ferrying Rhodesian security forces on their missions to "contain" Patriotic Front units — and the likelihood is that the very men they were ferrying were South African troops in Rhodesian uniform.

During the Lancaster House conference, in fact, ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo said the presence of South African troops in Rhodesia had been arranged between Salisbury and Pretoria. "I can't see South Africa acting

in defiance of Britain", said Nkomo. "Either Britain is in collusion with South Africa or she is acquiescing". But Carrington said he was not prepared to conduct a "witch-hunt" to winkle out these alien elements.

No one who saw the television reports of the Lancaster House conference could forget the complacent sneer on the face of the Rhodesian military commander General Walls as he listened to the proceedings; or his threat that a Patriotic Front victory would result in "immediate civil war". It was apparently quite clear in his mind who would fire the first bullet if such an eventuality arose. He already had in his pocket a pledge of South African intervention if a situation of "chaos" developed.

On top of everything, Soames insisted on keeping in force the state of emergency which gave him the power to detain without trial, ban meetings and take any other administrative action he needed to keep the people in check. How, under the circumstances, could there be "free and fair" elections in Rhodesia? How would it be possible for power to be transferred to the people?

As the election campaign dragged on, it became clear that the whole strategy of containing the African revolution had been co-ordinated between the imperialists and the racists of Rhodesia and South Africa. Western arms supplies had been kept flowing in a steady stream to the Smith regime, and the Bingham report exposed the complicity of the western oil companies in breaching sanctions against Rhodesia — a crime against the African people which the British government decided to leave unpunished, and about which that great defender of freedom and human rights President Carter has had nothing to say.

Soames did everything in his power to maintain white domination in Rhodesia.

A Reuter report on January 16 stated: "Despite the momentous changes convulsing Zimbabwe, Lord Soames seems to have done little to strip the white minority of its pivotal role in running the war-battered colony. Salisbury's armed forces seem as free as ever to patrol the bushlands, although the Patriotic Front has largely reported to Commonwealth-monitored ceasefire assembly places. Information is still controlled in part by the Salisbury regime. The information presented in the daily military communiques that pass through Government House stem exclusively from the police and security forces. On the surface, little has changed since Lord Soames' arrival".

Everything was being done to ensure a neo-colonialist outcome of the election. Under the circumstances, it would be a mistake to regard the

election itself as a process for the transfer of power. Whoever emerged in office would still face the problem of dismantling the real apparatus of power — the white-dominated military and administrative structures, the white and imperialist dominated economy, the power of the multi-national corporations. The struggle for liberation did not end with the ceasefire, but was merely transferred to a new arena — and in this arena the racists and imperialists hold strong strategic positions, and possess power, experience and know-how denied to the popular forces by a century of discrimination and neglect.

Nevertheless, let us place on record the fact that it was entirely due to the struggle and sacrifice of the forces of the Patriotic Front, backed by the mass support of the people of Zimbabwe, the front-line states and world-wide progressive forces, that the power of the former Smith regime was broken and UDI reversed. Nothing can diminish the significance of this extraordinary achievement. Nor can we have any doubt that the people who fought so successfully on the battlefield will succeed in their struggle for democracy and freedom in the difficult phase that lies ahead.

In an interview with the journal *New Times* ANC President General Oliver Tambo summed up the situation succinctly:

"The liberation war in Zimbabwe is part and continuation of the liberation wars which the peoples of southern Africa have waged against colonialism, racism and apartheid since the early 1960s. During these years the people have become united in the awareness that they are fighting for a common cause and against a common enemy. The revolutionary experience has heightened their political consciousness and clarified their definition of the enemy.

"In these circumstances the ceasefire agreement marks a strategic victory for the peoples of the region, for all progressive forces. But the enemy has not been vanquished. Therefore the struggle of the peoples continues. It is directed against the last remaining colonial, racist and apartheid power, the South African regime, which must be dislodged from Namibia and crushed in South Africa".

The President General called for maximum vigilance by all anti-imperialists to frustrate the imperialist counter-offensive aimed at naintaining the status-quo in southern Africa and striking at the revolutionary gains in Mozambique and Angola.

The problems of building African unity against white domination and imperialist exploitation revealed by the Rhodesia conflict deserve close study. Clearly, a paper unity which exists only at the top will not stand the

test of time. The prime requisites for enduring unity are:

1. Clarity about ideology and aims.
2. Mass adherence to the common programme.
3. An organisational and cadre structure capable of welding the diverse strands into a united and disciplined whole.

The spirit and understanding of unity must permeate the liberation forces at all levels, and cannot be imposed merely by decree or an exchange of letters. The need for and realisation of unity must also correspond with the objective situation, and cannot be produced only by subjective desire. The forcing of unity in circumstances which lead to ideological confusion, military paralysis and undermining of security can only result in the weakening, not the strengthening of the forces of liberation.

If these lessons taught by the Zimbabwean liberation struggle have been learnt effectively, the cause of liberation throughout Southern Africa will be that much further advanced on the road to victory.

CONSTELLATION OF RACISM AND IMPERIALISM

The involvement of South Africa in the Rhodesia settlement, including the deployment of South African troops inside Rhodesia, makes clear that the so-called constellation of Southern African states outlined by Premier Botha is in essence a plan for the expansion of South African imperialism. It is also plain that in this aim South Africa enjoys the support and co-operation of Britain and other imperialist states who regard apartheid South Africa as their most important bastion in Africa.

In an interview with the Johannesburg *Star* on October 6, 1979, Botha justified South African military intervention in neighbouring countries by saying:

"Rhodesia is a key state in southern African and its fate would also affect stability in this region. It is the target of the greatest onslaught at present, that of terrorists being fed by the communist powers. If chaos is forced upon Rhodesia at the point of a gun and disorder is created as in Angola, then parliament would be convened to consider the matter. We cannot have chaos on our borders without doing anything about it".

In other words, Botha does not want independent African states as neighbours, but only satellites, and is prepared to take military action to get what he wants. If "instability" exists in Angola today, it is largely due to the fact that South Africa houses, trains, equips and directs the counter-revolutionary forces of UNITA and other subversive groups attempting to overthrow the MPLA Workers' Party government. The dominating position of South African investment and trade in the whole of southern Africa is also a powerful weapon in the hands of the racists. South Africa had no hesitation in forcing "independent" Venda to cancel a deal with a Middle Eastern consortium last December, making a mockery of its proclaimed policy of Bantustans and "good-neighbourliness". In the South African scheme of things, neighbouring states and Bantustans will be free to do only what South Africa wants them to do.

The capacity of the apostles of apartheid for deception and self-deception is infinite. Interviewed by *Time* magazine on December 3 last year, Botha claimed grandly: "Our black people are free in South Africa. They have never been slaves like the black people in America". He also claimed that black leaders like the "mayor" of Soweto came to negotiate with him "as equals". But precisely what this means was demonstrated when the executive of the Coloured Representative Council came to interview him about his proposed three-tier parliament last November. Accusing them of dereliction of duty and dressing them down like naughty children because they had refused to give evidence to the Schlebusch commission investigating the plan, Botha lost his temper and burst out:

"Nobody can understand you, naturally. But you won't accept responsibility. You want to stay in your positions and now I finally want to warn you. I say this now, again, one man one vote in this country is out. That is never. And now I want to say this: don't try and do something unconstitutional . . . you will be sorry for yourself".

Whereupon the class was dismissed. So much for Botha's talk about "equals".

In his *Time* interview Botha also confirmed that "South Africa is not changing its policy to satisfy our critics. South Africa is developing the way it is because we believe that by doing this we shall become a constellation of states strong enough to withstand communism". He made it clear that his government's acceptance of the principle of one man one vote for Zimbabwe and Namibia would have no effect within South Africa itself.

In other words, South Africa's internal and external policies have the same aim — to consolidate white domination at home and South African

hegemony throughout southern Africa. The marginal and largely cosmetic reforms at home and the settlements in Namibia and Zimbabe are designed to absorb the revolutionary pressures of the oppressed masses while leaving the essential structures of exploitation and oppression unchanged.

Botha gave the clearest exposition of this strategy to the gathering of over 300 of the country's top businessmen and executives of the government and the state corporations which he convened in Johannesburg last November. Observing that Africa was in a state of revolution because of the widespread incidence of starvation, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and poverty (the legacy of centuries of colonialism and imperialism, though he did not admit it), Botha warned of the dangers posed by Marxism and said:

"We must demonstrate in a practical way the superior advantages of the system in which we believe and the benefits must be made apparent to the rulers and to the ordinary men and women of the region".

While appealing for the co-operation of big business in his plans, Botha admitted that "attempts to involve the private sector cannot succeed if based on the expectation that business concerns will become involved on purely altruistic or even patriotic considerations . . . The private sector must obviously have assurances of clear profit opportunities".

Seldom can a politician have stated more clearly the proposition that for the bourgeoisie profits come before patriotism or altruism, and Botha was at pains to assure the businessmen that his plans were designed to satisfy their greed both in the short term and in the long term. He added that after his tour of what he called "the national states" (the new name for Bantustans), "I am confident that they are pursuing an approach which is acceptable to business in regard to matters such as nationalisation of assets, the repatriation of profits and shareholding by their citizens".

He hoped that businessmen could be induced to invest in "the national states" and also in the neighbouring countries of southern Africa, given the assurance that the government would do everything in its power to protect their interests. And he mentioned that the Southern African Customs Union and the rand Monetary Area provided the basis for economic co-operation in the proposed constellation of southern African states. A Southern African Development Bank might also be established for this purpose.

Big business, speaking through Harry Oppenheimer, was quick to express its support for Botha's schemes, and there were in his audience a

handful of black entrepreneurs whose co-operation Botha stressed was essential if "peace and political stability" were to be achieved in South Africa. The profit motive, he hopes, will remove patriotism and altruism from the hearts of black businessmen just as it has done with the whites. For let there be no mistake about it — the thirst for profits effectively stifles all social conscience in the heart of the tycoon. One would have thought, for example, that a proportion of the hundreds of millions of rand reaped by our mining magnates and the state as a result of the gold boom would have been passed on to the workers. But Finance Minister Horwood has called for wage restraint. And Chamber of Mines President, Mr Dennis Etheredge, said the industry had no intention of paying out wage increases. In an interview last January he said:

"There is no case for them. Pay is unrelated to profitability, and the size of the pay increases should not be related to the gold price".

The mining industry, he added, would pay "only what the job is worth", and pointed to mass unemployment as one of the reasons why the mines had no need to pay higher wages to its African workers. Coupon clippers who produce no wealth are allowed to make their fortunes by speculating on the stock exchange. But the men whose sweated and dangerous labour produces the wealth are to get nothing except lectures about productivity.

Thus for the mass of the oppressed and exploited black peoples of South and Southern Africa Botha and the captains of industry have nothing to offer but the perpetuation of their suffering. Even the *Rand Daily Mail* was compelled to comment that "to discuss the building of a more harmonious and secure South Africa without reference to apartheid is an exercise in unreality . . . Nor can anyone realistically talk about building greater racial harmony without addressing himself to the main sources of black grievance — such as political rights, land and citizenship. And perhaps above all, influx control. Far from having been relaxed, this system has been effectively made harsher than ever".

In fact, the pass raids and arrests are being stepped up as never before. Pass law arrests in the main urban areas in 1978 rose sharply compared to 1977 — from 173,571 to 272,887. And the harassment continued throughout 1979. Legislation passed in the 1979 session of Parliament involved further restrictions on liberty, and the police force has now joined the army and the prisons service as state institutions almost totally immune from public scrutiny, so that the most diabolical crimes can be perpetrated against political opponents of the government without anybody getting to know about it. Nor is this a temporary phenomenon, but an inevitable

consequence of the monopoly of power by the white racist minority. And worse is to come. In his New Year speech Premier Botha promised to clamp down on what he described as "extra-parliamentary action". Action to curb still further the freedom of the press figures prominently on his agenda.

Aggression abroad and repression at home — this is the recipe the Botha government is offering to the world in the name of "reform" and "good neighbourliness". And it is precisely at this moment that the imperialist allies of the Botha regime stretch out the hand of friendship. The mongols of British rugby decide to undertake a tour of South Africa in defiance of African and world opinion and in breach of the Commonwealth Gleneagles agreement that sporting links with South Africa should be avoided. And Mrs Thatcher comes forward with her blatant admission that the proposed settlements in Zimbabwe and Namibia are intended "to make progress towards an ending of the isolation of South Africa in world affairs". Thatcher wants her South African ally to be made respectable.

The imperialist plan to strengthen South Africa as the main bastion of capitalism on the African continent must be exposed and combated by the liberation movement and its allies throughout the world. The question must be asked how it is that, once again, under the guise of defending "democracy" and "freedom" against the alleged communist menace, the imperialist powers are bolstering the most reactionary and bloodthirsty regimes in the world — those of South Africa, Chile, Pakistan, Zaire, Saudi Arabia etc. — whilst everywhere the true fighters for freedom and democracy, the liberation movements and the progressive independent countries, meet with nothing but imperialist opposition, abuse and hostility. And the question should also be asked where China fits into the picture. If the United States and Britain can join hands with China to defend the "free" world from communism, how can China still claim to be communist?

FREEDOM CHARTER — A BEACON TO THE PEOPLE OF S. AFRICA

by Alfred Nzo
Secretary General of the African National Congress

June 26, 1980, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, is an important highlight of this first year of the new decade. It is an occasion which challenges all patriotic South Africans to reassess the current phase of the liberation struggle in the light of the ideas of the Freedom Charter — the revolutionary programme of our movement. It is an occasion to cast our minds back over the past quarter century to see how and why the Freedom Charter has been and is "a beacon to the Congress movement and an inspiration to the people of South Africa", to quote the memorable words of our comrade Nelson Mandela. And it is an occasion to draw from this historic document fresh guidance and renewed dedication to the task which history lays on us, of uniting and mobilising all oppressed people, all progressive and democratic forces in our motherland for the overthrow of the hated apartheid system and the establishment of people's power.

It is fitting on such an occasion to look back over the long and stony trail which our people have trod in the past twenty-five years, because the progress that has been made, the advances won in the face of the bitter and

ruthless repression of the facist regime and the hostility of its imperialist backers, are a measure not only of the tremendous significance of the Freedom Charter, but also of the changing balance of forces in South Africa and the world and therefore of the rate of advance of our people towards inevitable victory.

The Congress of the People, convened jointly by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured People's Organisation, expressed more profoundly and authentically than any single event before or since the common aspiration of the overwhelming majority of South Africans, black and white, to live in peace in the country of their birth, to shape its future and share its fruits, to put an end to the centuries of colonial domination, racist tyranny, exploitation, misery and humiliation. After eighteen months of intensive preparation in every part of the country, the Congress of the People come as the culmination of the most widespread and thorough canvassing of opinion, of the most truly democratic process South Africa had ever witnessed. It built on the militant spirit of the Youth League and the Programme of Action of 1949, it consolidated the unity in action achieved in the mass campaigns of the nineteen-forties and topped by the Defiance Campaign of 1952, it gave cohesion and clarity of direction to the liberation movement at a decisive moment in its growth as a truly mass movement. In short, it laid the basis for the further development of our national liberation movement, and is one of those outstanding events which made our movement what it is today.

The Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter which it adopted were the outcome not merely of the preceding years of struggle but of the centuries of popular resistance to colonialism and race rule. In truth the Freedom Charter synthesised the many and varied strands of our peoples' tireless assertion of their will to self-determination. It reflected and always will reflect our undying opposition to the fascist monster that has disfigured our land and mutilated generations of our people. It is because the Freedom Charter embodies the heroic traditions and the sacred aspirations of the people that it lives today and gains fresh vitality with every step forward on the road to freedom.

It is salutary to recall that the Congress of the People was held at a time when the political strength and organisational capacity of the African National Congress was already beginning to shake the foundations of the fascist order in our country; when a peaceful road to freedom still seemed to lie open, some six years before the birth of the people's army, Umkhonto

We Sizwe; when the fighting unity of the different sectors of the oppressed was still in its infancy and the independent movement of black workers firmly committed to the political and economic emancipation of all workers had moved into a new stage with the formation of SACTU only a few months previously. The Congress of the People took place when the number of independent African states could be counted on the fingers of one hand and the formation of the OAU was still eight years distant. It was a time when the non-aligned movement had only just been born at the historic Bandung Conference, when French colonialism had been freshly defeated by heroic Vietnam but the long war against US aggression lay still in the future, and people's Cuba was no more than a dream in the hearts of Fidel Castro and the militants who rallied to the call of the revolution.

In this perspective, the clarity and correctness of the ideas of the Freedom Charter testify to the revolutionary maturity of those responsible for drawing up the Charter — the people of South Africa. That the Charter has stood the test of time, outlived its critics and defeated every attempt of the enemy to brand it as 'treason', demonstrates the rich heritage of struggle of our people, the justness of our cause and the necessity of the Charter as the definitive expression of the goals of our national liberation struggle.

Global Concepts

If many of the demands and concepts of the Freedom Charter have become essential elements of the policy of African and Asian states today, if they are already becoming living realities in the lives of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and other African countries dedicated to a new social order free from discrimination and exploitation, it is because our freedom struggle is an integral part of the world-wide struggle against racism, colonialism and imperialism for peace, independence and social progress. The vision which inspires us, the goals which bind us in unbreakable ties of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and with other peoples breaking the chains of slavery, the ideals which we share with the vast majority of mankind and which are set out in the Freedom Charter — these are at one and the same time the product of our own particular sufferings and struggles and the common heritage and universal experience of all oppressed and exploited peoples in this epoch of revolutionary transformations.

When in 1962 the South African Communist Party adopted its programme "The Road to South African Freedom", it advanced its

proposals for "the building of a national democratic state" specifically "within the framework of the Freedom Charter which the Party considers to be suitable as a general statement of the aims of a state of national democracy". The endorsement of the Freedom Charter by the SACP reflected the maturing of the alliance between it and the ANC and in turn helped to consolidate the alliance and strengthen the basis for future co-operation between the two organisations which has continued ever since.

To the racists the Freedom Charter spelled doom. Having tried and failed to suppress it as treasonable, they tried and failed to suppress the vanguard organisation of the liberation struggle which had mobilised the people for the creation of the Charter. The Congress movement fought back, declaring war on the enemy with the formation of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, on December 16, 1961. Frustrated by the 'no surrender' policy of the ANC and its allies, the racists sought to terrorise the masses into submission. Their answer came on the battlefields of Zimbabwe in 1967/68, in the birth and spread of the Black Consciousness movement, in the waves of clandestine propaganda, in the factories of Natal and the mine compounds from 1972/3 onwards and in the streets of Soweto, Alexandra, Guguletu, Bonteheuwel and a thousand other places in 1976. With the enemy devising new schemes to divide and further dispossess the people through the Bantustans and other puppet institutions, the African National Congress was already forging unity at yet a higher level in the Morogoro conference and in the struggles of the seventies. Through all this complex tapestry of different forms and methods of struggle, armed and unarmed, legal and illegal, underground and open, on the political, economic and ideological battlefronts, the ideas and inspiration of the Freedom Charter ran like a golden thread, unifying the diverse forces that together make up our liberation movement. Just as all the struggles which went before it contributed to the Freedom Charter, so all the struggles which have come after it owe something to it, and have brought closer the day of its realisation.

To mention some of the highlights of our movement since the Congress of the People indicates how far we have come in these twenty-five years. But no document, however profound or correct in its content and especially no document born of struggle and dedicated to change, stands still, motionless in the onward rush of history. The significance of this anniversary lies not only in the past but principally in the present and the future. History has placed on the shoulders of the African National

Congress a triple burden. Starting 68 years ago with the fundamental task of uniting the African people, the most oppressed and downtrodden, the ANC has moved steadily into the wider role of uniting and mobilising all the oppressed people and all democratic and patriotic forces. The Freedom Charter itself, with its vision of a free South Africa belonging to all who live in it, guaranteeing equal rights to all and creating the conditions for the economic, educational and cultural liberation and progress of all South Africans, points to a further stage whose tasks will only begin to be fulfilled when the racist system will have been overthrown and people's power established. The enormous challenge posed by this historic mission makes it impossible for us to rest on the laurels of past achievements. We cannot pause for a moment, but must examine afresh the obstacles in our path and see how to overcome them.

Botha's Total Strategy

Our country today is witnessing the disastrous infamies and effects of the total strategy of the fascist regime of P.W. Botha. The true meaning of this strategy is now open for all to see. It means total war against the people. To strip a people of their citizenship and make them foreigners in the land of their birth, is nothing less than to make war on them. To impose puppet regimes on them in the Bantustan islands of backwardness, saying "These are your governments", is to make war on them. And to uproot hundreds of thousands of men, women and children from their long-established homes and lands, driving them at gunpoint to bleak remote dumping grounds, where misery, disease, hunger, thirst, utter poverty and death await them — what is this if not an act of war? The barbarous forced removals practised in the name of the 'consolidation' of the Bantustans, the elimination of so-called 'black spots' in white South Africa', and the implementation of residential segregation under the Group Areas Act, all amount to a policy of genocide against the people and daily prove that apartheid, far from being dead, is spreading like a cancer bringing pain and death to all it touches.

Against this racist barbarism the Freedom Charter poses the aspiration of the oppressed for full and equal citizenship in one united and unitary South Africa, the restoration of the land to the people, the right to occupy land wherever they choose, freedom of movement and the replacement of all bodies of minority rule by democratic organs of self-government. Every act of resistance to mass removals, to Bantustan tyranny, to Pretoria's insidious scheme to eliminate all black South Africans, leaving the white

minority in sole command of 87% of the country, is an affirmation of the Freedom Charter. And this resistance is being waged up and down the country, from Crossroads to Pietersburg, from Walmer to Alexandra, and in countless homes and places where individuals and families, parents and youth stand up and denounce the enemy's actions and try by all means to thwart them and make them fail.

The Bantustan policy, properly understood as a criminal attempt to complete the dispossession of the people, perpetuate their subordination, intensify their exploitation and destroy their national unity by the creation of tribal satellite states, is totally rejected by the vast majority of the African people. Only a handful of politically bankrupt careerists and renegades have betrayed the national unity and sacred interests of the mass of the people for the sake of temporary gain. They will be swept away on to the rubbish heap of history together with their puppet-masters in Pretoria by the mass mobilisation of the anger and hatred of the people, inspired by the goals of the Freedom Charter and led by the vanguard and armed organisation of the people, the African National Congress.

All tactics and methods of struggle pursued by patriotic forces today against the Bantustan policy must therefore satisfy two fundamental requirements if they are not to lead into the path of betrayal and the furthering of the enemy's aims. In the first instance they must be consistent with the ideas of the Freedom Charter, which stands as a complete and consistent answer to the Bantustan policy. Secondly, they must advance and not retard, aid not frustrate that mass mobilisation and that armed action of the angry masses without which all talk of liberation will remain a dangerous illusion.

As *Sechaba,* official organ of the ANC, pointed out recently, the implementation of the Freedom Charter will:

> "presuppose and demand the *destruction* of the white racist regime and the *abolition* of national, cultural, religious and language privileges of Whites over Blacks. This will encompass the *equality of all ethnic groups* — large or small, black or white — and satisfaction of their national rights and feelings, traditions and customs, aspiration and emotions, characteristics and features and the *development of their languages and culture,* interaction between different cultures and languages and inter-ethnic contacts. This is what we mean by national self-determination.
>
> This entails the injection of hatred for the enemy and all that he stands for, imbuing the masses with a revolutionary consciousness and this should be accompanied by stimulation of national pride and identity, assertiveness and patriotism which are associated with the revolutionary traditions of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism of all our people and ethnic groups and their

positive contribution to the struggle for social progress. The solution of the national question in South Africa entails a 'violent change' (armed struggle) of the status quo, the raising of the living standard of the Black majority to that of the Whites and then the general improvement and development in material life and cultural welfare of all the people irrespective of race, colour or creed to an extent hitherto unknown in South Africa".

(3rd quarter, 1978)

The decade of the seventies, brought to a resounding close by the successes of 1979 as the Year of the Spear, were characterised at the subjective level by the rapid growth of precisely that revolutionary consciousness and the assertion of that national pride and dignity to which *Sechaba* refers. This was demonstrated most dramatically by the militant youth and students, who fought with such energy and many of whom showed their consciousness by volunteering for the people's army. But nowhere was this new assertiveness more in evidence than in the ranks of the oppressed workers, manifested in their numerous militant actions for improvements in their wages and conditions of work, against discrimination and victimisation, in the building of their own trade union organisations, in defence of their rights to organise and to strike and above all in support of general political demands. This mighty pressure struck fear into the enemy's heart and out of this fear and total failure of the state to quell the forward advance of the black workers by purely repressive means was born the fiendish scheme of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissioins to incorporate the organised elements of the working class into a state-dominated system of labour relations, while stepping up the destabilisation of the black working class by increasing migratory labour. At the same time, the state's economic policies are deliberately designed to maximise black unemployment with the aim of creating optimal conditions for the local and international monopolies to boost the lagging rate of their profits.

Year of the Workers

It is in this context that the declaration by SACTU of 1980 as the Year of the Mobilisation of the Workers takes on its significance as being complementary to, and indeed essential to the realisation of 1980 as the Year of the Freedom Charter as proclaimed by the African National Congress. The ANC has long recognised the fundamental reality of the South African situation that as long as the key levers of economic power remain in the hands of a tiny circle of rapacious monopolists there can be

no true freedom. The Freedom Charter points the way out of the present system of greed and super-exploitation with its bold assertion that the national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people; the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole; and all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people. As the document *"The strategy and tactics of the African National Congress"* adopted at the 1969 Morogoro conference correctly indicated, national emancipation is:

> "in a very real way bound up with economic emancipation. We have suffered more than just national humiliation, our people are deprived of their due in the country's wealth; their skills have been suppressed and poverty and starvation has been their life experience. The correction of these centuries-old economic injustices lies at the very core of our national aspirations".

The best guarantee of the implementation of this aspect of the Freedom Charter is the leadership of the working people in the national movement. It is precisely this leadership, this central role of the workers which the Botha regime is trying to avert by the plan to shackle the independent black trade unions, drive wedges between the minority of skilled workers who are permanently based in the cities and the majority who are unskilled and increasingly being turned into migrants and place the urban masses under the political influence of vacillating, if not fatally compromised middle class elements of the Thebehali breed. Again, the Freedom Charter comes out against all the key features of exploitation and offers a revolutionary alternative to the reactionary strategy of the bosses and their regime:

> *"There shall be work and security*
> All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to select their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers; The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work; and to draw full unemployment benefits;
> Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work; There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage; paid annual leave and sick leave for all workers and maternity leave for all working mothers;
> Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same right as all others who work;
> Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished".

The total war strategy of P.W. Botha has emerged in the recent period as the greatest single threat to the peace, security and independence of the states of Southern Africa and as the greatest obstacle to the winning of independence and people's power in Zimbabwe and Namibia. By its

persistent attacks on the peoples of Angola, Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique, either directly or through the bankrupt Muzorewa-Smith regime, by its violations of international law, threats and economic pressures against these countries and against Lesotho and Swaziland, the fascist regime has revealed that its masterplan for a constellation of states in Southern Africa is nothing more than an attempt to secure the eternal domination of the racist minority in South Africa itself by imposing neo-colonial dependency on all the peoples of the region, as a bulwark for international imperialism in Africa.

This attempt to reserve the gains of the people, won by heroic endeavour, to halt the advancing tide of national liberation and social progress is doomed to fail. The times have long passed when imperialism and reaction could dictate the course of events. Today it is the toiling masses, the patriotic forces, revolutionary democrats of diverse social origins, who are shaping their own destinies, backed by the true internationalism and growing strength of the socialist world, and no power on earth can stop them as the experience of heroic Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Iran, Polisario and the Palestinian people has decisively proven.

Our people's vision embodied in the Freedom Charter of a fully independent South African state (independent, that is, of imperialism and colonialism) which respects the rights and sovereignty of nations, which aims to maintain world peace and settle all international disputes by negotiation not war, which will secure peace and friendship amongst peoples by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all, which takes as the basis of close co-operation the independence and self-government of all the peoples of Africa — this vision of our region's and our continent's future is both fully consistent with the most progressive and increasingly decisive trends on a world scale and totally irreconcilable with the Botha nightmare of a constellation of states.

In this context the Botha regime would be well advised to reconsider its policy of intervening in Zimbabwe with a view to preventing the advent or consolidation of genuine people's government. Not only will our brother Zimbabweans refuse to be intimidated from seizing what is rightfully theirs, but our own people will not stand idly by watching any manoeuvre aimed ultimately at perpetuating the slave system in South Africa itself. And in the front-line states the peoples and governments are increasingly determined and able to defend their gains and see the process of liberation in our sub-continent through to its logical and inevitable completion.

Cosmetic Surgery

Faced by the mounting challenges on its doorstep and within its very house, the racist clique in Pretoria has been compelled to undertake cosmetic surgery, to seek to put a human face on the monster which all progressive mankind knows and abominates as apartheid. This too forms part of the total strategy designed for our enslavement. In the guise of reform it offers insignificant changes such as the abolition of statutory job reservation while maintaining the informal colour bar in industry, talk of "improving" the Immorality Act and Mixed Marriages Act while maintaining the obnoxious principles which underly them, allowing the registration of black trade unions but in conditions which will reduce them to impotence, abandoning the name of Bantu Education while preserving its substance — and many more such gestures of the same ilk. While the mass of our people are not allowed for one moment to forget that their oppression is worsening, not getting lighter, there are nevertheless in certain quarters elements who may be tempted into accepting the fascist regime on its own terms, thereby falling into the trap of reformist illusions.

The Freedom Charter, properly understood, is a defence against this manoeuvre, for the demands it contains cannot begin to be satisfied by piecemeal changes. They objectively require the seizure of power and the implementation of fundamental measures to transform our country and set it on the path which will lead it away from racism and exploitation, towards true independence, equality, social justice and peace.

By the same token, the outside world can also judge the reforms of Botha and his fascist gang by the yardstick of the Freedom Charter. Only those who will grasp at any straw to justify their continuing collaboration with the racists and their greed to profit from the labour and suffering of our people will evade the conclusion that the 'new look' of the South African regime is the same old abomination thinly disguised. Others, less ignobly motivated, may be tempted to find in these cosmetic changes evidence of an inevitable drift towards the de-racialisation of the state and a peaceful evolution towards a more just social order. We owe it to them, as well as to ourselves, to take advantage of the Year of the Freedom Charter to drive home the reality of our country, that a state founded on colonial conquest and dispossession cannot legitimise itself, cannot and does not desire to right historical wrongs, and that our struggle requires the overthrow — not the modification — of the existing state and its replacement by a democratic state, based on the will of all the people. In

short, we seek no more and no less than other colonised peoples have sought and any attempt to reduce the scope of our struggle, as defined by the Freedom Charter, to one for 'civil rights' is ultimately an attempt to treat the fascist regime as legitimate and a rejection of our movement and its struggles as illegitimate.

We South Africans have little chance for illusions about the enormity of the task we are engaged in. In this 69th year of the African National Congress we rejoice in the inexhaustible resolve of our people to be free which has guaranteed that our vanguard organisation has overcome all efforts to rout it, and has gone from strength to strength, so that today its prestige at home and abroad has never been higher. Yet more difficulties and obstacles lie ahead, and in measuring the distance that still lies between where we are today and the South Africa of the Freedom Charter, we turn again to the Charter itself as the programme of the people which alone can unite them into the irresistible movement which will crush the apartheid system. Bus boycotts, workers' strikes, resistance to mass removals, the battles against higher rents, evictions and pass law harassment, the fight against apartheid sport, against dummy pseudo-representative institutions such as Community Council and the SA Indian Council, the struggles for fair wages, for jobs and houses, against colour bars in all walks of life, the fight against inferior education, against censorship and the suppression of the people's culture, the building of an ever stronger underground movement capable of withstanding all blows, the resistance of our comrades in jail and in court, of which the militant defiance of James Mange and his fellow accused is an outstanding example, the inspiring assaults on police stations and other armed actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe — these and countless other acts of resistance, reflecting an incredible variety of forms and methods of struggle in widely differing conditions, are given coherence and united into one powerful force by the simple fact that every aspiration they represent is found within the Freedom Charter. It is thus that the Freedom Charter gains in significance with every passing year. Its demands, clearly and simply stated, embrace all the local and particular, sectional and regional struggles and unite them into a national movement for liberation.

That the ideas of the Freedom Charter are gaining ground rapidly in South Africa today is clear from even a superficial glance at the policies and progammes of different groups. Consciously or unconsciously echoing the Charter (and increasingly it is consciously), the demands of different sectors of the oppressed chime together in a swelling and harmonious

chorus. Fortified by the support of the socialist countries and other anti-imperialist and progressive forces, the African National Congress is soberly confident of its capacity to widen and deepen the political mobilisation of the oppressed masses and democratic forces to the point where it becomes possible to transform the ideas of the Freedom Charter into an irresistible physical force. This is the challenge of the eighties.

At a time when the enemy is trying to drive tribal wedges into our national unity and to woo other sectors of the oppressd with separate solutions, seeking out every individual or clique that is prone to place personal advancement above the interests of the people as a whole, the Freedom Charter shows how group and sectional interests can be reconciled within a common movement and indeed can only be defended as an integral part of a common programme. There is on an unprecedented scale in South Africa today, and not only amongst the oppressed but also among those who in the short term benefit materially from the privilege of being white, an anxious search for ways out of the dangerous crisis into which the Afrikaner Nationalist Party has led our country. It is our task in 1980 to carry the Charter to all such people so that they can see for themselves that there is a way out, entailing self-sacrifice, but not suicide and guaranteeing a peaceful and just future. For the Charter is the destiny of all South Africans, all patriots and neither the Charter itself, nor the courageous militants who take up arms to fight for it, can be denounced as treason or traitors to our country. Rather it is the criminals who have turned our fatherland into an armed camp who are the traitors. They are prepared even to unleash a nuclear holocaust in their futile bid to retain power. These are the ones who have betrayed South Africa. The growing number of young whites who refuse to fight under the banner of this betrayal is itself a symptom of the bankruptcy of the regime and its growing inability to deceive even those reared within its fold.

In its tireless efforts to constantly widen and strengthen the unity of patriotic forces the African National Congress is guided by the spirit of the Freedom Charter because, as the people's charter, it is a touchstone of patriotism in our situation. While aiming at the utmost flexibility so as to combine all forms and methods of struggle, the ANC also recognises that history has moved on since the Congress of the People, closing to us the peaceful path which then seemed open and obliging us to take up arms against the oppressor. Today, with the lessons of people's war and the victories it brought in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe bringing us renewed inspiration, patriotism also requires a truly positive response to

the challenge of mounting a people's war in our own country. All the signs are that this response will be forthcoming and that the Year of the Freedom Charter will carry us much closer to the sacred goals of the people.

Long live the Freedom Charter!

The struggle continues!

Victory is certain!

Amandla ngawethu! Matla kea rona!

All power to the People!

WHAT IS THE COMMONWEALTH?

by Phineas Malinga

Before last year's conference of Commonwealth heads of governments in Lusaka, few observers expected to achieve anything. Most such conferences in recent times had combined an exchange of platitudes on unimportant issues with an unproductive confrontation on the question of southern Africa. That was particularly true of the last occasion (in Singapore) when the United Kingdom representative had been a Conservative Prime Minister. Edward Heath then appeared to revel in the isolation which his decision to resume arms sales to South Africa imposed upon him. It seemed highly likely that Mrs. Thatcher would equally intransigently proclaim her intention to recognise the "internal settlement" in Zimbabwe, with the result that total disagreement between the governments present would have to be registered.

The actual outcome was quite different, and the agreement reached in Lusaka has, for better or for worse led on to a completely new phase in the Zimbabwe situation. The various manoeuvrings which led to the Lusaka agreement have been widely reported in the world press. It is now well known that the Commonwealth Secretary General, "Sonny" Ramphal,

worked out a strategy in advance, in consultation with Malcolm Fraser, of Australia, and Michael Manley, of Jamaica. His chances of success were improved by the unexpectedly good personal relationships achieved between Mrs. Thatcher and Presidents Kaunda and Nyerere. The Australians nearly wrecked the whole thing by prematurely leaking the proposed agreement to the press. Then Ramphal saved the day at the repeatedly described service in Lusaka Cathedral and barbecue at Fraser's villa.

So much for the ephemeral details. The more important question which they suggest is, in the light of these events, what significance is to be attached to the Commonwealth in the modern world? Is it still a real force and, if so, a force for what?

Historically, the British Empire was above all a closed market, in which British capitalists could, on the one hand purchase raw materials and on the other hand, sell their products without being exposed, in either case, to the full force of international competition. It was the extreme measures taken to monopolise the trade of the British North American colonies which drove the majority of those colonies to revolt in 1776. The century which followed, that of the Industrial Revolution, saw the dynamism of British capitalism at its height — so much so that international competition was of less importance. By 1880, however, the world supremacy of British industry was already passing into history. Exclusive access to the markets of the Empire was increasingly vital.

Therefore, when in the period after the First World War the British began to have to concede self-government to their colonies, great efforts were made to preserve the economic advantages of Empire. Commonwealth Preference became the cornerstone of the new arrangements. The Ottawa Conference of 1934 set up an elaborate system of trade preferences. In the circumstances of world depression which then prevailed, preferential access to the British world market for their raw materials was of some value to the "self-governing Dominions". Preservation of their own relationship with their traditional overseas markets was of inestimable value to British capitalists.

As the years went by, the efforts of various less developed Commonwealth countries to protect their own nascent industries led to increasing erosion of the Ottawa system, but Britain always remained eager to keep as much of it as possible in being. A striking illustration arose in the case of South Africa. In spite of South Africa's withdrawal from the

Commonwealth and in spite of repeated demands by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and other opponents of racism for the withdrawal of Ottawa preferences from South Africa, successive British governments, Labour and Conservative alike, took no action.

The last remnants of the preferences in South Africa's case were not dismantled until the late seventies, and even then on South Africa's, not British initiative. The reason why South Africa finally abolished the Ottawa preferences was that Britain's membership of the E.E.C. had made it impossible for preferences to be given to South African agricultural products, so that there was no longer any adequate *quid pro quo* for the preference accorded by South Africa to British manufacturers.

This individual case illustrates the general evolution which took place after the Second World War. The former British colonies, as they achieved political independence, took steps (to an extent which varied from one case to another) to encourage indigenous economic development, which inevitably meant the breaking up of the old Imperial market and the decline of British trade with the other countries of the Commonwealth. That decline eventually reached a point at which it became impossible for Commonwealth trade to continue to be the centrepiece of British economic policy. The result was British accession to the E.E.C., which represented a decisive break with the old system. In many areas, Commonwealth preferences now had to be abandoned in favour of E.E.C. preferences. In other areas, Commonwealth preferences had to be amalgamated with the LOME Convention — the system by which former British, French and Belgian colonies are linked in a network of trading agreements with the E.E.C. as a whole.

The same period saw the dismantling of the Sterling Area. In 1945, all the Commonwealth countries except Canada had currencies linked to sterling. Then international trade was mainly conducted in sterling, which meant that it was conducted through the British banking system. The position was gradually broken through the combined pressure of two factors. On the one hand there was the desire of independent Commonwealth countries to control their own balance of payments, which meant abolition of convertibility of their currencies into sterling. On the other hand, there was the increasing weakness of sterling and inability of the British financial system to cope with the financing of a large share of world trade. Ironically, the last ex-colony to break the link with sterling was the one which had been the first to leave the Commonwealth — The

Republic of Ireland. On 1st January, 1979, Ireland joined the European Monetary System and the last remnant of the Sterling Area disappeared.

The result is that the Commonwealth is now no longer an important economic phenomenon. The economic systems and trade relations of Commonwealth countries are now determined by a wide variety of factors. Their past as members of the British Empire is certainly one of those factors, but their present membership of the Commonwealth does not appear to play any major role.

The Secretariat

The fact that the Commonwealth survives as a political phenomenon certainly has something to do with the existence of the Commonwealth Secretariat. This is a comparatively recent creation. It was formed in 1965 — a date which suggests a connection with the failure of Britain's first attempt to join the E.E.C. It has its headquarters in London and is headed by Sir Sridath "Sonny" Ramphal, a former Foreign Minister of Guyana. Its budget is modest by the standards of international organisations — a mere £2½ million per annum. This is contributed 30% by Britain, 20% by Canada, 10% by Australia, 4½% by India and the remaining 35½% by the remaining 38 members. The division of expenses suggests that it was Britain which chiefly wanted the Secretariat to come into existence. The idea, in 1965, very probably was that the failure of the E.E.C. negotiation would make it necessary for Britain to revive economic links with the Commonwealth.

As things have since turned out, the Secretariat does not play any signficant role in that connection. Politically, it has served rather as a vehicle for bringing pressures to bear upon Britain, on behalf of the African, Asian and Caribbean member states. This has been particularly true in connection with the southern African situation. Though no leftist, "Sonny" Ramphal is an enemy of racism and over the years he has used his position to express the anti-apartheid views of the majority of Commonwealth governments. These views fall short of full support for the liberation movements, but include support for the Front Line States, condemnation of the "internal settlement" in Zimbabwe and support for the proper enforcement of sanctions against the Smith regime. A study by Martin Bailey and Bernard Rivers, commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1977, played some part in exposing the sabotage of oil sanctions by British-owned multi-national oil companies.

It was therefore entirely consistent with his longterm role for Ramphal to do his utmost to moderate the extreme right-wing position of the Thatcher government at the Lusaka and Lancaster House conferences. Reports claiming to tell the inside stories of those conferences all agree in attributing an important influence to him. Depending on whether or not the 1979 ceasefire proves to have served the people's cause in the long run, Ramphal will deserve a share of the credit or the blame.

But all this brings us little nearer to an understanding of what the Commonwealth Secretariat really is. Its high-level interventions in southern African affairs represent only a small part of its fifteen-year history. What does the Secretariat do with the rest of its time?

Its published annual reports reveal a wide variety of activities. The report for 1979 has chapters on international affairs, Southern Africa, economic affairs, export market development, food production and rural development, science and technology, health, youth, education, information, law, applied studies in government and on a fund called the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. A perusal of these chapters, however, does not reveal anything of major importance. The money at the disposal of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation was just under £9 million in 1977-78 and the budget for 1979-80 is £13½ million. The Fund was created in 1971 and at present permits some 330 technical experts to be seconded from one Commonwealth country to another. The flow of experts is not simply outwards from Britain; India and Bangladesh have sent agricultural experts to other countries and the Caribbean islands have supplied experts on the tourist industry. There is a team of lawyers and economists whose services are available to small countries whose governments have to negotiate with multi-national companies. Small countries have been helped with the drafting of technical legislation and with law reform. There are various schemes of co-operation in the fields of health and education. It all seems moderately useful and essentially small-scale.

It is however striking that these activities involve a great deal of contact between Commonwealth countries at various levels of government. The last three pages of the Secretariat's 1979 report are entirely devoted to a list of meetings, 138 in all, held in the two-year period between the London and Lusaka Heads of Government meetings. The list includes meetings of Finance Ministers, of Industry Ministers, of Law Ministers, of "senior tax officials", of "senior metrication officials", and from that sort of level all the way down to a "youth workers training course".

The Connecting Links

Here it may be that we are getting close to what makes the Commonwealth tick. Though no longer an economic bloc, though now both politically and economically disparate, the Commonwealth is still a group of countries ruled by people who know each other — who constitute in some measure a coherent group. They are people who speak the same language, not only in the literal sense that English is either their mother tongue or a familiar second language, but also in the metaphorical sense that they are all the products of a single educational system.

In some cases the things they have in common are very specific indeed. Margaret Thatcher and Indira Gandhi both went to Somerville College, Oxford. Edward Heath, Dennis Healey and Sir Seretse Khama all went to Balliol College, Oxford. A full list of present and recent Commonwealth leaders who are graduates of Oxford University would include Benn, Fraser, Gandhi, Hailsham, Healey, Heath, Khama, Siaka Stevens, Thatcher, Eric Williams and Harold Wilson. Graduates of London University include Burnham, Manley, Ramphal, and Trudeau, while Lee Kwan Yew, David Owen and Tunku Abdul Rahman are all Cambridge graduates. Banda and Nyerere were both at Edinburgh Unviversity. Those who have studied law at the Inns of Court in London include Burnham, Dato, Hussein, Hailsham, Lee Kwan Yew, Thatcher and Tunka Abdal Rahman. Finally, former students at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, include Lord Carrington and General Peter Walls, as well as numerous other military men who have held political office in Commonwealth countries at various times during the last fifteen years. In other words, six British educational institutions, all strongly identified in the eyes of the British people with "the Establishment", constitute a network of connections between leading Commonwealth politicians. A similar picture would emerge if one looked at senior civil servants, senior officers of the armed forces, or judges.

The signficance of these facts should not be exaggerated. The role of the politician or civil servant depends essentially on the class forces which he or she represents, not on his or her education. Nevertheless, the institutions by which members of a ruling class are trained for public office and the personal connections between such members are a not unimportant part of the superstructure of any given society. We are dealing here with superstructural institutions which have in some measure outlasted the economic realities on which they were based. In other words, the degree of contact between the ruling circles in Commonwealth countries is more

appropriate to the degree of economic integration which existed in the past than to that which exists now. It follows that over the years, this contact will tend to diminish.

In the meantime, what is the immediate effect of these survivals? They can be used as an instrument by which the governments concerned can influence one another. Events have shown that such influence can be brought to bear by African and other Commonwealth member states, on Britain, in a progressive direction. It is, however, to be feared that the preponderant influence is likely to be in the opposite direction. Although the term "British Commonwealth" has been dropped in favour of "Commonwealth" by itself, and although the principle of equality between Commonwealth states is formally observed, the fact remains that we are talking about the former British Empire. The common institutions – the superstructural connecting factors – are all rooted in British bourgeois culture and political philosophy. In the nature of things, they are more capable of use for the ends of the British bourgeoisie than for anybody else's. This has been seen in practice in the Zimbabwe case, in the success of the British Foreign Office in putting across the understanding of the Lusaka agreements to other Commonwealth countries, in the integration and implementation of the Lancaster House agreement.

We may conclude that because of the preponderant influence of the British bourgeoisie, the Commonwealth as it exists today promotes the interests of British imperialism. Progressive forces in the countries concerned should work to change or dismantle it.

NATIONALISM AND CHAUVINISM IN THE S.A. REVOLUTION

by T. Singh

Black Power in South Africa — the Evolution of an Ideology, by Gail M. Gerhart. University of California Press, Price £7.00.

The growing concern with and interest in the politics of the Southern African conflict by the United States is increasingly being reflected by the large numbers of books and studies by writers and academicians in that country. Over the last nine years or so, for example, the University of California Press has published a number of studies of which Dr Gerhart's is the nineteenth to appear in the series "Perspectives on Southern Africa".

Dr Gerhart's book sets out to deal with the development of a particular "strain" within the ideology of African nationalism – the "Africanist" tendency, which Dr Gerhart refers to in her book as "orthodox nationalism", which came to be the cornerstone of the politics of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). The writings of Steve Biko, with one or two important differences, were a reflection of this tendency, though the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) carried within itself a number of diverse political and ideological currents.

The evolution of this tendency is traced through a study of the life, times, writings and political activities of four men regarded by the author as its foremost exponents — Anton Lembede, Ashby P. Mda, Robert M. Sobukwe and Steve Biko. The impact of this "increasingly significant strain of African political throught" on the politics of national liberation in South Africa is dealt with by way of examining the development of policy,strategy and tactics of the ANC since the 1940's, when Lembede began articulating his ideas, and the manner in which the PAC translated these ideas into political action in the brief period between its formation in 1959 and Sharpeville in 1960.

The link which gives continuity to the ideas and actions of Mda, Sobukwe and Biko, the author asserts, is to found in the writings of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede, "the principal architect of South Africa's first full-fledged ideology of African Nationalism" (p 51). Very little is known about Lembede's early life before his arrival in Johannesburg in 1943. He was born of peasant origin in Natal in 1916. After completing his basic education with what must have been some distinction he was awarded a bursary to study teaching at Adam's College in Durban. It is here that he met and associated with Mda and Jordan Ngubane who were to play an important role in his future political development.

From Natal the family moved to the Orange Free State where Lembede took up a teaching post. During this period he succeeded through a rigid programme of self-education, austere living and a brilliant mind in obtaining the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law through correspondence courses with the University of South Africa. The decision to pursue a career in law led Lembede to move to Johannesburg where he became articled to P.I. Seme, a former president of the ANC and one of its founding fathers. His political awakening and involvement dates from this time and was due in no small measure to the influence of Mda, with whom he had re-established contact and who was then active in the ANC Youth League. Although only officially launched with the blessing of the ANC leadership in 1944 the League at that time existed as a "remarkable group of young men, members of the ANC, who were, like himself, questioning the world view of their leaders and groping towards a new analysis of the African predicament" (49). Among this group of thinkers and activists were to be found some of the most dedicated leaders of the ANC in the years to come — Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, to name only a few.

Lembede's "nation building faith"

It would appear from Dr Gerhart's account that Lembede came to the conclusion that the most crucial element missing from the ANC's attempts to mobilise the African people against white domination was a comprehensive ideology — one that was "essential for Africans if they were to maximise their resources in the unequal struggle against white dominance" (55). What seemed to have strengthened this conviction was Lembede's observations of the power of ideas on the Afrikaner, German and Italian peoples. The extent to which Afrikaner Nationalism and Nazism were able to rouse the masses fascinated Lembede, even to the point where he came to admire and argue for one or two aspects of these reactionary ideologies. It was left to Mda to disenchant him, but his preoccupation with the need for an ideology remained. The ANC argued Lembede, had failed to offer the African people a body of ideas to which they could relate, in which they could discover themselves and which reflected their truest aspirations. The ANC had never preached a "nation-building faith" (78). With the assistance and encouragement of Mda, Lembede began articulating the new ideology "that could serve the interests of African emancipation" (54). He called this new ideology "Africanism" and writing about its force he was to claim ". . . the dynamic human energy that will be released by African Nationalism will be more powerful and devastating in its effects than . . . atomic energy" (62).

What were the main elements of Lembede's ideas?

For Lembede the key to unleashing the "atomic energy" latent in the mass of the downtrodden African people was an ideology aimed at psychological liberation. The African people had to be freed from "the crippling complexes of inferiority and dependence imposed . . . at the hands of the whites" (55). The way out of this debasing self-image imposed by and deriving from white supremacy rule was through a militant ideology that held in its centre a "nation-building faith" — a faith in "the Africans' own worth, a pride in their past, a sense of self-reliance and confidence in their own ability to determine their own future" (78).

The emphasis on "the people" rather than leaders is an important theme running through Lembede's writings, and the old notion that "the people patiently toiled, suffered and nursed their grievances, leaving it to their better-placed and better-educated brethren to represent their claims and complaints in the form of deputations, conferences resolutions and policy manifestos" (77) was severely criticised. What was essential was mass struggle.

For Lembede the African people already existed as a unity, a single nation, by virtue of the "nationalistic feelings of the Africans" (60). Given the will to unite, Lembede asserted, "Africans had all the essential properties of a single nationality" since all the people were "dominated by the same spirit" (61). And again: "Such minor, insignificant differences of language, customs etc. will not hinder or stop the irresistible, onward surge of the African spirit" (61).

In his writings on African culture, heritage and history this idealistic, subjectivist approach tinged with mysticism asserts itself time and again.

But it is in the field of the political struggle against white domination that Lembede appears to have formulated a number of tenets that became the cornerstone of PAC policy. Firstly, Lembede's ideas on African self-reliance denied the need for solidarity and unity. Self-reliance, he wrote, could

> "realise itself through, and be interpreted by, Africans only. Foreigners of whatever hue and brand can never properly interpret this spirit owing to its uniqueness, perculiarity and particularity" (61).

Secondly, there was no real basis for unity, even among the black peoples.

> ". . . co-operation between Africans and other Non-Europeans on common problems and issues may be highly desirable . . . (Complete) Non-European unity is a fantastic dream which has no foundation in reality" (76).

Thirdly, communists could not be relied upon to struggle with any conviction in the cause of African liberation, since they

> "would always work to undermine nationalism because of their commitment to the theory of class struggle and to internationalism" (ibid).

It was particularly the aspects of self-reliance without solidarity, African exclusivism and anti-Marxism which the PAC latched on to in its counter-revolutionary drive.

Political Assessment

The issues which Lembede addressed himself to were not only of historic significance, but have a relevance even today. Hence the need to attempt a proper assessment of their validty for a revolutionary theory. Dr Gerhart does not do this, but we have to attempt it.

As a necessary element in the struggle to liberate the oppressed from white supremacy rule in South Africa the emphasis which Lembede placed on psychological liberation remains vital to the strategy of mass

mobilisation. Almost three decades later the writings of Steve Biko and others in the BCM echo and emphasise precisely the same sentiments. In its Strategy and Tactics document adopted at the Morogoro Conference in 1969 the ANC underlines the need for such liberation:

> "The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group – the African people. This demands in the first place the maximum mobilisation of the African people as a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation. It involves a stimulation and a deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness".

Even within Lembede's lifetime the dictates of the political struggle of the African people veered sharply away from the line of march indicated by his ideas.

Black unity was being gradually forged out of the necessities of struggle against a united white tyranny. Already in 1938 the United Front was formed in an attempt to give maximum leverage to the common struggle of the black peoples. In 1947 the Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo Pact of Cooperation marked the recognition of the necessity of unity between the oppressed. And in 1946 the historic African mineworker's strike brought to new heights the cooperation between the national and class organisations of the people – the ANC, the Communist Party and the Mineworkers' Union. Mutual solidarity and support were very much the order of the day during the anti-pass campaign launched by the ANC and the passive resistance campaign launched by the Indian Congress.

More importantly, the goals of African nationalism were being defined much more sharply in political rather than the idealistic terms of Lembede. Two years after Lembede's death the Programme of Action adopted by the 1949 Conference of the ANC defined these goals as "natural freedom", "political independence" and "self-determination."

Not only were the goals formulated in political terms, but the means of achieving them came to be more precisely formulated. Henceforth the strategy for black liberation was to be mooted in mass actions by way of civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts, stay-at-homes and non-cooperation with the regime of white supremacy. As Dr Gerhart herself concludes:

> ". . . Lembede's belief that there could be no directed mass action without the inspiration of a clearly articulated "nation-building" ideology was not by 1949 a conviction widely shared by most members of Congress" (84).

and again,

> ". . . it was for action – not ideological theorising – that the ANC leadership now geared itself" (84).

Had Anton Lembede lived on to test his theories in the course of actual struggle he may well have modified some of his ideas. For example, Brian Bunting in his biography of Moses Kotane points to the close cooperation between Kotane, then general secretary of the Communist Party, and Lembede, then president of the ANC Youth League, at the emergency conference to discuss the mineworkers strike in 1946 – a cooperation which was "symptomatic of the greatly improved relations between individual ANC Youth League members and the Communist Party" (*Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary,* p 138) and furthermore:

> "Before he died at the tragically early age of 33, Lembede had also changed his attitude towards the Communist Party. 'They are workers, not just talkers', he admitted grudgingly to Kotane" (ibid).

Despite the imperfections, inconsistencies and highly idealistic overtones of his theories, Lembede made a valuable contribution to the radical alteration of ANC strategy from reliance on persuasion and petition by the leadership on behalf of the people to placing the liberation struggle fairly and squarely in the hands of the African masses themselves under a dynamic leadership.

The main weakness of Lembede's approach to the solution of the "African predicament" was his over-reliance and emphasis on ideology as a weapon of struggle. Both the BCM and the PAC were to experience the limitations of this approach to political mobilisation. "Theory", Karl Marx pointed out, "becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses". Yet theory on its own is not sufficient. The crucial "other side" is practice. As Lenin reminds us:

> "Only the struggle educates the exploited class. Only the struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizons, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will"

If the ANC's theory, strategy and tactics in the 1940's were still imperfect and lacked precision, due in no small measure to the lack of experience of mass struggle, its linking of the positive, mobilising aspects of African nationalism with such key elements of struggle as organisation, political goals, strategy, tactics and mass action was essential for the development of an all-round revolutionary theory as expressed in its policy document *Policy, Strategy and Tactics of the ANC* adopted at the historic Morogoro Conference in 1969.

In the final analysis some of the imperfections and shortcomings of Lembede's ideas must be ascribed to objective conditions, particularly the low level of development of the productive forces. For example, Lembede's

one-sided emphasis on the national aspects of the struggle was a reflection of the fact that the African working class in the early forties was only beginning to emerge as a major political and social force.

At the same time Lembede's ideas did not emerge from mere discussions and debates with A.P. Mda, as the author appears to suggest (". . . and his friendship with Mda rapidly developed into an intellectual sparring partnership in which the two read, argued and reasoned their way together . . . toward a new philosophy . . ." 54), but were a reflection of the reality of that period. This was a time when the ANC was beginning to strengthen its roots among the mass of the African people. Under the impact of the Second World War the manufacturing sector of the South African economy was rapidly developing and the African working class was increasingly asserting itself. The war also brought to the fore the idea of the "right of nations to self determination" and the anti-racist and anti-colonialist nature of the fight against Hitler fascism – precisely the issues which the Communist Party was vigorously campaigning on in the country. All these, and many more, began exerting an influence on the leaders and peoples of the country in their search for the solution of the "African predicament".

A.P. Mda, R.M. Sobukwe and the PAC

Although Dr Gerhart's book abounds with abstracts from the writings and speeches of Mda and Sobukwe and even P.K. Leballo, three men who were in the leadership of the PAC at various times, very little new appears to have been added by them to Lembede's formulations. Search as one may there is no trace of the "development" of the ideology of African nationalism, as the title of the book leads one to expect.

For A.P. Mda, Lembede's teachings had to be clothed with the politics of struggle. Succeeding Lembede as President of the Youth League, Mda was to write:

> "Granted a new clear-cut outlook, a clear program of struggle, and the development of new methods of struggle, the African National Movement could take unprecedented steps forward" (77).

Given that this insistence on theory and practice accorded with the thinking of the leading members of the Youth League and of the revitalised leadership of the ANC, how is it that Mda found himself by 1959 in the leadership of the breakaway PAC? Regrettably, Dr Gerhart's book does not give a clear answer. For one thing, Mda seems not to have

been involved in the mainstream of political struggle from the mid-forties to the formation of the PAC. For another, Mda came to apply the concept of self-reliance in its narrowest sense: it had to be *African* self-reliance *without* solidarity. This appears to be the key to an understanding of Mda's eventually turning to the PAC.

Whilst he did not openly come out against the growing cooperation and alliances between the ANC, the Communist Party, the Indian Congress and other national organisations of the people, he apparently held a deep suspicion that this process was an obstacle to the process of developing an *African nationhood,* or for that matter African self-confidence in deciding their destiny. Throughout the stirring decade of struggle of the fifties when cooperation and unity were being surely forged in the heat of battle against white domination by all anti-racist and democratic forces, both national and class, Mda and the Africanists remained aloof while the more narrow-minded among them, like P.K. Leballo, began openly playing a reactionary and counter-revolutionary role.

With R.M. Sobukwe and the PAC, the "nation building faith" of Lembede was reduced to two main elements: anti-communism and African exclusivism. They considered that the way to capture "the hearts and minds" of the African people was through an attack on the ANC on three grounds (a) that the ANC had abandoned the 1949 Program of Action, (b) that the ANC had abandoned the "nation building faith" by its alliance with the other national organisations of the Congress Alliance thus paving the way for its domination by communists and non-Africans, and (c) that the Freedom Charter was a "blue-print for communism".

The only "policy" which the PAC put before the African people was Pan-Africanism. And this reduced itself to a slogan: Africa for the Africans. In the South African situation this meant a "go-it-alone" tactic by the African people in the fight against white domination.

The culmination of this disastrous policy was the great tragedy of Sharpeville as the PAC tried to upstage the ANC's proposed nation-wide anti-pass campaign with its own ill-organised, and ill-led one.

But Sharpeville also proved that the mass of the African people had very little faith in the particular brand of African nationalism of the PAC. As Dr Gerhart herself admits:

> "The PAC had invited the Africans to pit themselves against the full might of white South Africa, and most had declined the invitation" (251).

Looking back to its formation 20 years ago how does the author view the policy and role of the PAC then? Were the charges against the ANC

justified? Why did the "Africanists" force a break with the ANC? Once again Dr Gerhart is strangely reluctant to combine research with analysis.

A proper scrutiny of the history of that period refutes the charge that the ANC leadership had abandoned the Programme of Action of 1949. The entire decade of the 50's was one in which the ANC led the people in mass campaigns of defiance, civil disobedience, strikes, stay-at-homes and non-cooperation – precisely what the Programme demanded. The Congress Alliance was the logical outgrowth of the policy of the ANC even in Lembede's lifetime i.e. cooperation, solidarity and unity between all the anti-racist and democratic forces in the struggle against white supremacy rule. The Freedom Charter is not a programme for a socialist South Africa – it is a programme for the creation of a non-racial and democratic South Africa based on majority rule. But most important of all, and the author and the PAC are quiet on this: it is the Freedom Charter which embodies the demands of the vast majority of the people, because they themselves voiced those demands.

Nor was the Pan-Africanism of the PAC that of Du Bois or Nkrumah, but derived from the counter-revolutionary, neo-Pan-Africanism of George Padmore. Dr Gerhart reminds us that George Padmore's book *Pan-Africanism or Communism* was the most popular handbook of PAC leaders and activists. She has nothing to say about its content. The false dilemma posed by the title of the book represents nothing less than the opening up of Africa for imperialist penetration in the post-decolonisation period i.e. a recipe for neo-colonialism. Where Du Bois and Nkrumah emphasised African self-reliance and solidarity, especially between the African liberation movement and the socialist countries, Padmore substituted anti-communism. Where Du Bois and Nkrumah insisted on the anti-imperialist content of the African revolutionary process, Padmore preached accommodation with imperialism under the mask of anti-sovietism. At the All-African Peoples Conference held in Accra in 1958 the ANC reaffirmed its anti-imperialist commitment. The PAC at the same time was busy breaching the anti-imperialist front inside South Africa through its divisive policy and activities.

In the end PAC policy played right into the hands of the apartheid regime and its imperialist allies, even to the extent that the regime's police actively assisted the Africanists in their strike-breaking efforts at the time of the general political strike called by the ANC and the Alliance in 1958.

In short, PAC policy turned out to be reactionary and counter-revolutionary.

A Change of Mind

In analysing the role of the ANC during the 1950's, however, Dr Gerhart sheds her modesty and apparent lack of critical faculties. What emerges, though, has very little to do with reality.

The ANC, according to Dr Gerhart, was a liberal, reformist movement with a strategy based on expediency.

Writing about the campaigns of the 1950's Dr Gerhart says:

> "Also in keeping with the liberal tradition, the ANC throughout the 1950's continued to project its aims as essentially reformist rather than revolutionary"(94).

And about the Freedom Charter:

> "Underlying all these objectives was . . . the acceptance of liberal democratic institutions as the ideal form of government" (94).

The Congress Alliance was important, not as part of an overall revolutionary strategy dictated by the neccesity of uniting all the forces opposed to apartheid, but for:

> "the financial, logistic and press support which accrued to the ANC as a result" (122).

Quite brilliantly Dr Gerhart has succeeded in turning the world upside down; reality is firmly stood on its head, and what is revolutionary is miraculously transformed into its opposite – reformism and liberalism.

The Freedom Charter is a revolutionary programme precisely because it strikes at the heart of the entire system of oppression and exploitation in South Africa. Its realisation can only come about through the total destruction of the entire system of apartheid and the seizure of state political power by the people. It has a deep-going anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist content. It makes no allowance whatsoever for a reform of the prevailing socio-economic structures. Whilst it does not in itself constitute a programme for a socialist South Africa, it lays the material and social basis for a transition to such a society.

If Dr Gerhart had really examined the nature of the campaigns of the 1950's she might have come to a different conclusion. The campaigns were designed to build the ANC as a mass-based organisation; to create the conditions for maximum cooperation, solidarity and unity between all the classes, social forces and national groups in the struggle for national liberation; above all: to draw the mass of the people into active opposition, defiance and resistance to white supremacy rule and so imbue them with a confidence in their own ability and strength. In short, the real road to "nation building" lay through the fire of experience of the people in

struggle. That the struggles of the 1950's were a dress-rehearsal for a thorough-going revolutionary onslaught against the system was proven when the ANC, less than a year after being banned, proclaimed its commitment to revolution through armed struggle. Reformist or revolutionary organisation?

And if Dr Gerhart had taken the trouble to examine the struggle in South Africa in the post-1950 period perhaps she might have seen the ANC in its true light. And the PAC.

The section of the book dealing with the writings of Steve Biko and the BCM adds little if anything new to our understanding of both. Toussaint's article "Fallen among Liberals – an Ideology of Black Consciousness" remains the best critique to date. (See *African Communist*, No 78, Third Quarter 1979).

Dr Gerhart's research is very wide. What is lacking is a method of analysis that can unravel from the wealth of data the essence of the revolutionary process that is evolving in South Africa today and which has its roots in the past of which she writes.

This year SACTU celebrates its 25th birthday

THE WORKERS' FIGHT FOR A NEW SOUTH AFRICA

by Labor

The tactics of the ruling class in South Africa with respect to the trade unions have been firstly to oppose and suppress them with all the means available to the state. This applies equally to all trade unions, whatever the colour of their membership. The early history of the white workers shows this, as does the subsequent history of the Coloured, Asian and African trade unions.

Where such tactics have failed the ruling class embarked on a process of divide and rule along lines of colour and to a lesser extent of skill. Although in South Africa the division of skill is largely along the lines of colour, the division is not only between skilled white and unskilled black workers since in some industries the division is also between skilled and unskilled Coloured and African workers.

In this the ruling class was assisted by many of the leaders of the white workers who, in the early days, brought their race prejudice with them from Australia and England. In classical fashion the white Labour Party in South Africa was instrumental in assisting the Nationalists during the Pact government of the early twenties to codify these racial divisions. The state

adopted its third tactic of incorporating the trade union movement into its legal framework with the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. By thus "legalising" the white, Coloured and Asian trade unions it created the framework for controlling their actions and persuading them to work within the confines of capitalism and apartheid.

Having thus divided the movement between African and white i.e. unregistered and registered, the Nationalist Party captured large sections of the white trade unions and subsequently, riding on the Afrikaner workers' backs, took power in 1948.

By the mid-1950s the battle lines in Africa were being made clear. Imperialism was on the verge of losing its grip on Africa. An independent Egypt under Nasser had challenged Britain over the Suez Canal and won. At the other end of the continent, the African National Congress, after the defiance campaign, was emerging as the force capable of challenging and overthrowing apartheid, imperialism's defender in the South.

The leadership of the trade union movement in South Africa had by now been taken over by the African workers. South Africa being the most highly industrialised state in Africa, this was to prove a most significant step for the continent. On 5th March 1955 the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was formed. The core of its strength was the African workers, the aim was the liberation of the working people, its policy was one of unity of all workers irrespective of race, colour or creed, of militancy and action. One of the first items on the agenda of its founding conference was its name, and with the adoption of the name S.A. *Congress* of Trade Unions, it was made clear that politics was its business and that the African National Congress was its chosen ally.

SACTU chose a path of struggle and the trade unions it led contributed, and continue to contribute, valiantly to that struggle. For twenty-five years SACTU has remained unswerving in its stand against apartheid and racialism. Tens of thousands of its members have been brutally beaten and attacked by the police, during local and national strikes. Dozens of its leaders have been arrested, banned, jailed, tortured or done to death, but still the leadership and the workers are unbowed. SACTU has taken its rightful place in South Africa, Africa and the world as the only trade union co-ordinating centre which in the heartland of fascism in Africa has stood uncompromisingly for justice, peace and freedom. With SACTU a member of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, of the World Federation of Trade Unions, attending conferences of the International Labour Organisation and participating in the work of United Nations

agencies and having gained the respect and assistance of trade unions and national trade union centres throughout the world, its tasks have become more complex and demanding.

SACTU has travelled a long road from its small beginnings. Its forebears, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, the Indian Workers' Association, the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions and others would be proud of their descendant. The next twenty-five years will be harder but the rewards for our people will be even greater. That is the task we must look to now.

When we approach this task of the trade unions in the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for socialism, history bears heavily on us. Our task encompasses the *whole trade union movement,* from the near fascist white mine workers' union to the "unorganized" but militant and politically advanced African miners. Even the term "trade union" has a different meaning when applied to African workers and to white workers. To the African worker it is an organization which leads them in struggle against apartheid, against the boss. To belong to one is a political commitment. It means taking the side of Congress, taking sides against apartheid. To the white worker it means an office, a bureaucracy, a way of getting improvements by compromise, protection against the cold winds of unemployment, "lowering of standards", "black encroachment", and the occasional *exceptionally* unreasonable boss. For the white worker it is a way to privilege.

Into this we, as revolutionaries, have to inject a spirit of revolt and mobilise and organise the people to change South Africa, first and foremost to destroy apartheid. The task is multi-sided and needs considerable effort.

History of Struggle

About 37% of the white workers are organized into trade unions, i.e. 440,000 out of 1.2 million. Of this 1.2 million, approximately half a million are in Government employ, nearly a quarter of a million are in the army or the citizen forces and 200,000 are in the S.A. Confederation of Labour whose leadership is more right wing than Wiehahn and the Government. Some 63,000 are in the Trade Union Council of S.A. whose leadership is essentially reformist. This leaves some 180,000 white workers in unions not affiliated to co-ordinating bodies.

In all, the white workers represent a considerable force harnessed to serve and defend apartheid. They did not easily or automatically become

allies of apartheid. Their battles in the early part of this century to assert their rights against the employers and the state were many and bloody before they were finally bought off.

Efforts should be made in our propaganda both externally and where possible in South Africa to assist those within the white trade union movement who oppose apartheid even in small ways. The battle to win them to the side of the African workers will be a long one, but it is an essential task. The future South Africa will have white workers, they must be on our side.

Significant lessons can be learnt from the German Democratic Republic and its success in re-educating and leading the German workers, many of whom had been duped by the Nazis, to participate in the building of socialism. It is too easy and simplistic to dismiss the white workers in South Africa as fascists who are lost to the cause of socialism or national liberation. Any, even the smallest split in the white front must be recognised and encouraged. Such an approach to the whites is not new. The formation of the Congress of Democrats at the request of the African National Congress in the early fifties was a clear recognition that firstly, as the Freedom Charter says, "South Africa belongs to *all* who live in it, black and white . . ." and secondly, that South African whites are not inherently bad but have been made what they are by imperialism. It is also wrong to think that the white workers have "all the rights". Compared to the African workers they are certainly privileged, but they have fewer rights and freedoms than the workers in West Germany or Britain, and compared to the workers in the German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union they are mentally and physically imprisoned.

The Coloured and Indian workers are a considerable force. Out of a total of approximately 600,000 workers, nearly 40% are in trade unions. These unions are mostly registered and form the backbone of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (165,000 out of a TUCSA total of 219,000).

Comparing the stand of TUCSA on the one hand, and the Coloured Labour Party and other political movements amongst the Indian and Coloured people on the other, it is clear that the leadership of these unions is lagging behind the political understanding and militancy of the membership. We must reinforce our influence and stop the few right wing trade unionists in TUCSA from continual compromise with apartheid.

The Coloured and Indian workers are the natural allies of the African workers since they suffer like them the added oppression of racism. However, the right to trade union registration has blunted the political

stand of some sections of these workers and helped to create divisions between them and the African workers. The aim of Riekert and Wiehahn is to do the same with respect to the "Section 10" African workers, those with the right to remain in the urban areas. It is, however, quite clear that the overwhelming majority of the Coloured and Indian workers have never been won over to the white state and that unity of all black people in South Africa against apartheid has grown steadily.

The only force which can bring about the necessary changes in TUCSA (and in the very much longer term in the Confederation of Labour and independent white trade unions) is the African trade union movement. There are, however, many trends in these unions at the present time and the picture is by no means static.

The mass of workers realise the need for a complete change from apartheid. They experience daily oppression and cannot be bought over or made to acquiesce in their own oppression. Their main problem is organization and their successes in this task vary in scale and type in different areas of exploitation. There are a million farm workers, desperately in need of organization, who have no rights at all and to whom normal trade unionism cannot apply. These workers are amongst the most brave, determined and sincere and any efforts we make to help them will be repaid a thousandfold. In agriculture capitalism is rampant with all restrictions removed. The majority of white farmers are no longer even willing to allow their workers the right to grow a little food on the side. Child labour is widespread. Whereas farm prisons were notorious in Bethal and Ermelo in the 1950s, today with the tightening of the pass laws and residence permits and the withdrawal of citizenship rights under the Bantustan system, every farm has become a prison. During the Soweto period, crop burning and similar protests took place on some farms, showing the political awareness of the workers. But strikes in such isolation are not likely to have much success unless the farm is very large. Other methods of action and organisation among farm workers must now be considered.

The Bantustans

The Bantustans or 'independent' stars in Botha's constellation provide the basis for the extremely low wages of the "commuters", the recruits for the mines and farms, and the pool of workers who can be used as strike breakers. The Bantustans are also the dumping ground for agitators. The biggest growth points in the Bantustans are the unemployed and the civil

service. The tensions in such a situation are immense. SACTU has been active in "border" factories, but SACTU activists have time and again found themselves endorsed out of urban areas and exiled to remote areas in these Bantustans.

The tendency amongst our militants has been to return to the battle in the towns, neglecting the need to organize the unemployed and dispossessed workers in these dumping grounds. This is a mistake. It would also be wrong to neglect the organization, or at least the influencing of the Bantustan civil service, who cannot all be sell-outs.

The mineworkers (some 600,000) have clearly remained unbowed. Wages have improved owing to their militancy and the need to get more South African workers because of the decreasing numbers coming from the other African states in Southern Africa. Life itself has created organization amongst them. These workers need special attention since this is a vital economic area and a large part of the work force is still drawn from neighbouring states. Some progress has been made. A Migrant Workers' Charter has been drawn up in co-operation with liberation movements and governments of states bordering South Africa. Co-operation with friendly governments has been established. A work-based organization run by the mineworkers themselves is a distinct possibility if the necessary spade-work is done.

Women workers have proved on numerous occasions that they are great fighters for trade union rights and freedoms. In textiles, food, garment and other industries they have often shamed the men. The time is now ripe for a new assault by the women especially in domestic service (approx. 500,000) and the clothing industry. Women in domestic service are suffering increased oppression because of pass laws and unemployment.

The other African workers, some 3 to 4 million, have some organization recognisable in western trade union terms as trade unions. About 100,000 are in some 30 or so trade unions (a rapid increase during the last four years from about 40,000 in 1975, in spite of all the government and employers could do). There are a number of federations or associations of these trade unions such as the Federation of S.A. Trade Unions (FOSATU) – 20,000 African workers plus some registered Coloured and Asian unions. The Consultative Committee of Black Trade Unions claims 37,000 (mainly African) members. Many Africans are unaffiliated to any body or keep their affiliations quiet. At most, trade union members form 2% of this urban work force.

Does the leadership of these trade unions reflect the political and

economic demands of the urban African workers? Does the number 100,000 reflect the real trade union feeling and strength of the African workers?

It is clearly difficult in the political climate of South Africa for legal but circumscribed organizations to express anti-apartheid views too openly. FOSATU for example is non-racial but there is also talk in FOSATU circles of "keeping politics" out of the trade unions, and that SACTU was and is "too political".

It is also clear that there are outside forces determined to mislead the South African trade union movement into reformism and co-operation with imperialism along the lines of the trade union leadership in West Germany, America and Great Britain. These foreign forces are extremely active and have considerable sums of money at their disposal. (Wiehahn gives a figure of R300,000 in the year 1978/79 and even though he does not regard the recipients as agents of imperialism, Wiehahn nevertheless advocates that this help should be stopped).

Should We Register?

Wiehahn clearly recognises the power of the African workers and the danger of granting "freedom" for African trade unions, and so has instead offered registration instead of recognition. He clearly regards registration as a means of containing change and keeping the African unions under government control. As a result we must advise against such registration and encourage registered unions where possible to unite with unregistered unions even if this means they have to de-register to do so. The act of de-registration means breaking the chains and the workers must realise this and be strong enough to maintain their organisation when they embark upon this course.

There are moves by some unions to change into mixed unions of white, Coloured and African members, while remaining registered. This means accepting apartheid and separate branches, with the power left in the hands of the white section. African, Coloured and Indian workers cannot accept second class citizenship in South Africa and certainly not subservience in their own trade unions.

In spite of the complex choices now being offered to the workers – parallel unions, liaison committees, national or local unions and so on – the main task of our cadres is clear. It is to organise at our places of work, struggle for higher wages and better conditions. In struggle, experience will teach the workers that a trade union is an instrument for change, for

the overthrow of apartheid, and those forms of organisation which do not promote this aim will soon be abandoned by the workers. We must organise wherever the workers are to be found, and never allow "theories" to separate us from life.

Although SACTU has never been banned in South Africa, for all practical purposes it is treated as an illegal organisation. Our demands sent to employers in South Africa and publicised among the workers were immediately banned, our newspaper *Workers' Unity* has been banned, our known activists are harassed and persecuted, jailed, banned or exiled. To be able to agitate and organise among the workers our cadres have to work in an underground manner.

We can only succed in our tasks if we maintain the closest contact and co-operation with the liberation movement. The scope for trade union work is extensive and we have too few people active at places of work throughout the country. Trade unions are a school for struggle and political education, especially for the young workers. The unions are able to forge links between workers in the Bantustans and the urban areas, between the factories and the townships and between factories in different parts of the country. It is not too much to say that the revolution cannot succeed without an organised and revolutionary trade union movement. The tendency to underestimate the importance of trade union work must be combated and our comrades in MK, ANC, the Women's League and the Youth must be educated in trade union work. When the liberation movement takes power, it will need to understand and have the means to solve labour problems.

SACTU is an invaluable weapon in overcoming racialism and division in the national and international labour movement. Racialism, nationalism and chauvinism divide the workers, and it is our job to unite them against their common enemy, the boss class at home and abroad, the multi-national corporations and other imperialist agencies. In this, our 25th anniversary year, let us rededicate ourselves to the task of liberating the South African workers, uniting them in struggle. Recognising that the working class is the main driving force for progressive change, let us maintain our leadership by hard, consistent, disciplined work. History demands that we succeed.

THE POETRY OF AGOSTINHO NETO

M.K. Makana

With the death of Comrade President Agostinho Neto we lost not only an inspiring leader, skilful statesman and courageous fighter. We also lost one of the greatest of Africa's and the progressive world's poets.

The torrentous surge of mankind's struggle against and victory over oppression and exploitation in the past century has brought to the surface of our cultural history a new kind of poet — the fighter-poet. We have discarded the poet of the bourgeois world, who sits alone in his garret, mourning the world's loss of innocence, bemoaning his individual pain and isolation, dreaming of abstract and unattainable beauty, who can see no further than the symptoms of the exploitative system that gave birth to him.

We, who have long seen beneath the symptoms, and are delving all the instruments at our disposal into the roots of the system, we have in our midst an army of new poets, revolutionary poets, in the true sense — poets of the people. Agostinho Neto was an outstanding member of this army.

What are the features which characterise this new generation of writers?

Firstly, and most importantly, these writers are not only writers. They

are activists. They have shed the image of the writer as a special member of society with some sort of mysterious ability to capture the essence of life in writing. These new poets strive to make the ideals they speak of in their writing a reality. They do not float like some god above the people. They immerse themselves in the people, in the people's struggle. Along with the people they face hardship, imprisonment, torture, exile and death.

Secondly, these new writers express in their writing the suffering, the hope, the struggle, the love, the hate and the triumphs of their people. Whatever the subject matter of their writings – whether it be the landscape of their oppressed country, love or death, or even the personal loneliness of exile or prison – their writing always carries in it the struggle of their people, the massive movement of history.

That Agostinho Neto was one of these new poets is unmistakably evident from his life and his writing.

His life was an unceasing devotion to the struggle and the achievement of his people's most cherished dream – freedom from the vicious colonialism of fascist Portugal, and freedom from brutal economic exploitation. He struggled against overwhelming odds to train and qualify as a doctor in order to play even a small part in providing his people with the medical care they were denied. And despite the immense effort this demanded of him, he still found the time and the strength to participate fully in political activity. He was imprisoned many times, spending many years in the hands of the notorious PIDE – the Portuguese secret police. But each time he came out of prison he continued his political work, undaunted by prison and torture, as though prison was just a rude interruption of the long process of struggle. Thankfully he lived to see the fruit of long years of struggle, and the dreams he spoke of in his poetry, realised in the liberation of his long-suffering Angola.

Like his life, the poetry of Agostinho Neto is filled with the sufferings, dreams and struggle of his people. Nowhere, even in the most despairing of poems, does he sink into despair. Every poem points forward. Every poem is a call to action.

For instance, in the poem 'Farewell at the hour of parting', written in 1945, thirty years before Angola was liberated, he says:

"My Mother
(all black mothers whose sons have gone)
You taught me to wait and hope
As you hoped in difficult hours
But life killed in me that mystic hope

I do not wait now
I am he who is awaited
It is I my Mother
hope is us
your children
gone for a faith that sustains life"

One of the most important themes in Neto's poetry is powerfully contained in the two lines:

"I do not wait now
I am he who is awaited"

In other words, we can no longer passively wait for things to happen — we must become those who make things happen.

The language of Neto's poetry is clear and straightforward. He doesn't allow himself to be carried away by flowery words and rich images. He has something important to say, and he must say it clearly. At the same time he doesn't resort to cliches and slogans. He draws us pictures which in their simplicity and strength serve to burn his meaning into our minds. For instance:

"There we go!
Shadows without desire
their senses numbed
like a beach wanting to be a wave"

What can be a more powerful image of the long-suffering Angolan people than that last line? Just like a beach which for centuries has to bear, unmoving, the continuous pounding of the waves, longs to be a part of that vital, powerful motion — so the Angolan people longed to emerge from centuries of passivity to become a part of the powerful current of history.

One of the themes that keeps recurring in Neto's poetry is the theme of Africa. But for him Africa is not the mystical continent of the Pan-Africanists and the upholders of negritude. It is a living, struggling reality, with its own class divisions and internal contradictions. Above all, it is a vital part of the whole of struggling humanity. Neto's nationalism is an integral part of his internationalism.

For instance, in the poem 'Reconquest' he talks to the African who has taken on the ways of the coloniser.

"Come with me African in fancy trousers
let us go down into the street
and dance the tiring dance of men

the simple batuque of the washerwomen
let us hear the anguished tom-toms . . ."

"come with me Africa of western stages
and discover the real world
where millions are matched in the same misery
behind the facades of democracy of
christianity of equality . . ."

He concludes this poem with a profound statement of internationalism:

"Let us go with all of humanity
to conquer our world and our peace"

In another poem Neto writes the short but pregnant lines;

"return Africa
to me
with dry eyes"

This image of dry eyes recurs in another poem:
"Create with dry eyes"

'With Dry Eyes' was also the title of a book of Neto's poetry. This sharp image expresses the determination to transcend suffering, to move forwards. It's another way of saying: Don't mourn, mobilise. This is perhaps the most central of Neto's themes — a call to action, inspired by the knowledge that victory is certain.

While in prison Neto wrote these lines:

"Here in prison
rage contained in my breast
I patiently wait
for the clouds to gather
blown by the wind of history
No one
can stop the rain"

But when Neto says he is waiting patiently he does not mean that he is waiting passively. We must remember that he wrote these lines in prison where he was put for his actions. And it is action that will bring the rain. In a poem called 'Haste' he writes:

"Let us end this tepidness of words and gestures
and smiles hidden behind book covers

and the resigned biblical gesture
of turning the other cheek

Let us start action vigorous male intelligent
which answers tooth for tooth eye for eye
man for man
come vigorous action
of the people's army for the liberation of men
come whirlwinds to shatter this passiveness"

Through many years of bitter struggle Neto kept the goal of his people firmly in his mind. It was not an abstract dreamer's goal. It was a goal which was concrete and difficult, the path to which was long, hard and strewn with pain and death. The certainty, difficulty and concreteness of this goal is reflected in his poetry.

In a fitting counter-image to his 'dry eyes' image, he says in one poem:

"it is not on the grave
that our shed tears will fall
but in the joy of the great embrace
when we celebrate the rebirth"

And in a poem written from exile in 1960, he says:

"Come at the hour
impatience simmers in hearts which struggle
in smoke of factories and creaking of cranes
men and wheels, sweat and noise
combined in building the liberated country
consciously in building the country
with no penetration of the germ of exploitation
with no nauseating voice of the overseer
heralding the fall of the whip
and men happy in the discomfort of today
on battlefields, in prison, in exile
building tomorrow, for a land ours, a country ours independent

"From chaos to the world's new beginning
to the progressive start of life
and enter the harmonious concert of the universal
in dignity and freedom
independent people with equal voice
as from this vital daybreak over our hope"

Agostinho Neto is one of the great poets of the struggling people of Africa and all humanity. The simplicity, accuracy and realism of his poetry is a living example to our own young poets who are combining poetry and struggle in the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe; just as Agostinho Neto's life is a living example to all the struggling peoples of the world, so that in following his example we all may be:

"independent people with equal voice
as from this vital daybreak over our hope".

AFRICA NOTES & COMMENT

by Vukani Mawethu

Egypt: The Fruits of The Camp David Accord

According to reports, full normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel would not take place until early in 1980, when the first stage of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai would have been completed. But many contracts have already taken place between Israeli and Egyptian companies — a development which has been much faster than expected due to high-level encouragement on the Egyptian side. Here are a few examples:

+ A delegation of 30 Egyptian businessmen arrived in Israel in October last year and individual state-licensed Egyptian agents as well as manufacturers have already visited Israel. Israel is equally active. Cairo-born Yitzhak Matza, head of the Israeli solar heater company, Miromit, has already concluded an agreement with an Egyptian metal working company for the formation of a joint company to produce solar water heaters in Egypt;

+ Koor Trade is to open offices in Cairo shortly, while its Egyptian counterpart will establish an office in Tel Aviv;

+ A group of Israeli businessmen returned from Egypt and formed a special company, Goshen, to engage in two-way trade between the two countries and establish and manage joint projects in the fields of industry, agriculture, tourism and construction.

The fraternisation between Sadat and Begin takes curious forms:

"Call me Menachem . . ."; "Call me Anwar . . ."

But there is no corresponding fraternal exchange at lower levels.

This plunder of Egypt is assuming international dimensions:

French and Italian companies have discovered huge resources of natural gas in the Mediterranean north of the Nile Delta.

Four districts of Cairo (Helwan, Maadi, Nasr City and Heliopolis) are to be supplied with natural gas — this is Sadat's directive to link all cities in Egypt with a natural gas supply — and the so-called World Bank has agreed to finance the project with the equivalent of £E56m in hard currency, representing about 70 per cent of the total cost of £E80m for the first stage; the rest will be paid by the Petroleum Authority in Egyptian pounds.

The Egyptian Rural Electrification Authority signed an agreement in mid-September with the General Electric Company of the UK for four new power stations as well as the equipment necessary for the expansion of another four stations. The agreement is worth £7m of which £2m is being provided by the British Government.

Egypt is negotiating with an unnamed group for a $5bn long-term contract for the sale of Sinai oil.

Volkswagen of West Germany is to set up a plant in Egypt to assemble its "beetle" cars from parts manufactured by the company's factories in Brazil. The plant, to be built at either Alexandria or Ismailia, will have a planned annual output of 10,000 cars during its first year, rising to 20,000 cars a year. Volkswagen is putting up 40 per cent of the DM50m cost of the plant, with the remainder being provided from the West German aid programme to Egypt and from Arab investors.

This collaboration is not only in the economic field — the military is also involved.

On October 21, 1979, Egypt and the US signed an agreement for joint co-operation in the field of military production. The Minister of Defence and War Production and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Gen. Kamal Hasan Ali, said after the signing of the protocol that the agreement

was considered one of the most important achievements in Egyptian-US relations. It provides for the transfer of modern technology to Egyptian military construction and production units and the addition of new lines to military production. It also provides Egypt with the ability to produce tracked armoured vehicles for the first time; the establishment of electronic industries (not just assembly plants); and missiles, optics, shipping, ammunition and aircraft spare parts. Among other things Egypt has a $1.5bn arms deal with the US (Phantom F-4 fighter bombers and armoured personnel carriers) while Chinese F-6 Shenyang fighters are also available.

It is clear that the US is injecting a lot of capital into Egypt as well as into Israel.

The "peace treaty" (Camp David Accord) with Israel has led to a deteriorating internal economic situation and the erosion of democracy. Institutions of state have become more bureaucratic and their attitude towards the opposition and mass organisations more hostile. The agreement has generated instability on the home front.

The Americans believed that a separate treaty between Egypt and Israel would hasten the process of a shift towards the West in the Arab world, but it has complicated issues. Egypt is in isolation and the Americans cannot afford to be identified with the Egypt which is in isolation in the Arab world: hence Andrew Young's attempts to contact the Kuwaiti ambassador at the UN and the PLO representatives.

Opposition to Egypt outside its borders is growing, hence Sadat is brutal against opposition internally. Many suspect members within Sadat's own political party have been kicked out and new members co-opted. Those who are likely to challenge him have been summarily removed and replaced with yes-men. Not only the communists, ultra-leftists, radical intellectuals, right wing elements like the Muslim Brothers, but also religious groups, naturally for different reasons, are against him. Journalists were among the first victims. We have in mind Muhammed Hassanein Haikal, former editor of the semi-official Al Ahram and one-time confidant of the late President Nasser. Sadat has reversed Nasser's policies and hopes to have a firm grip on the Egyptian situation by suppressing the left and encouraging the right.

Zaire: Expatriates "a flourishing community"

French paratroopers ended the Kolwezi uprising about 18 months ago. 600 expatriates have returned since the events of May 1978. Gecamines is the state-owned copper-mining company which virtually runs the town. It has 200 engineers, technicians and administrators. The wives and children give an air of normality to a town that has not fully recovered from the 1978 uprising. Gecamines employees are cushioned against the harsh economic climate by imported food and fuel, company housing and social services. Part of their salaries are paid in hard currency — "a flourishing community".

The minerals in the province of Shaba (formerly Katanga) provide nearly three-quarters of Zaire's foreign currency earnings. But all is not well in this African "paradise".

During the 1978 uprising more than 90 Europeans and about 1,000 Africans were killed. More than 2,000 Europeans were evacuated and their French and Belgian rescuers were replaced by a 2,500 member force from Morocco, Senegal and other African states.

Gecamines, faced with falling production in the absence of skilled expatriates, embarked on a major recruiting drive. European mining experts, fearing renewed violence and mistrustful of the competence and efficiency of the Zairean army, were reluctant to return. Only 100 Europeans were recruited in the nine months following the Shaba uprising and most of them left their families in Europe. Many were prepared to quit as soon as the "inter-African" force withdrew, partly because Zairean troops have a reputation of brigandage and a tendency to melt into the bush at the outset of a battle.

Half the 200 expatriates now in Zaire with Gecamines are on short-term contracts from other companies. Most of the new recruits are young men looking for "experience", quick savings and a "new job" rather than a career. The older men are too close to retirement to think of leaving. Zaireans are not trained — neo-colonialism in practice!

The result of the Shaba uprising was a fall in copper production. The output of seven open mines and one underground, accounting for 75 per cent of the Gecamines total, fell sharply, leaving the company with production in 1978 of 331,000 tonnes compared with 450,000 tonnes in 1977. In 1977 output was consistently below target. Gecamines had another problem: the large-scale repair of roofless or bullet-pocked buildings — a reminder of the Shaba uprising.

The defence of the Kolwezi district is in the hands of the South Korean-trained Kamanyola Brigade of 5,000 men led by the Belgian-trained General Sassa. These soldiers are poorly paid. Backing up the Kamanyola Brigade is the 2,500-man 21st infantry brigade, trained during the past year by Belgian officers and NCO's. The 10,000 Zairean troops garrisoned in Shaba province are not particularly impressive and Mobutu's "confidence-boosting" visits are not reassuring to the expatriates, let alone the Africans.

The squalid living conditions of the Africans are beyond description. The country's continuing problems, high level of crime (some of these underfed and unemployed Africans have formed armed gangs) and the general feeling of insecurity and uncertainty about future prospects are the main threat to the province's security. The dependence on European expatriates makes Mobutu's position worse than that of the Shah of Iran before his overthrow.

Benin: Programme of Reform

The People's Republic of Benin, known before November 1975 as Dahomey, was first penetrated by the Portuguese in the 18th century, followed two centuries later by the Dutch, French and English merchants and slave traders. Here on the Gulf of Guinea coast, a large slave market developed. In the ancient town of Dindah there are still the remnants of the gruesome adobe sheds which were packed with thousands of slaves waiting to be shipped overseas. The slave trade did great damage to the country and for a long time the hinterland in central and southern Benin remained virtually depopulated as the slave trade halted the further development of the peoples of the country.

In the 19th century the European imperialist powers began to colonise Benin, France becoming the prime coloniser. The kingdoms that had by then appeared in Benin could not, despite their stubborn resistance, withstand the European inroads. In 1893, following three years of war, the French completely overran Benin and colonised it. The people resisted the invaders. In 1915 the French had to send troops to quell an armed uprising in some areas, and in 1923 the imperialists were faced with outbreaks of mass unrest. The growing national liberation movement, which after World War Two spread throughout the continent, was so strong that in

1958 the French had to grant Benin the status of an autonomous republic within the French community. On August 1, 1960, Benin became an independent state.

Independence was followed by a long period of political turmoil, with five military coups rocking the country, ten successive presidents and governments, both military and civilian, and political parties and public organisations appearing for a while only to break down or be disbanded. "Tribal" and political disunity, encouraged by some elements in the leadership, played into the hands of the neo-colonialists who took advantage of these rivalries. Loyalty to the "tribe" was the most important consideration in politics and most prominent politicians were not immune to "tribalism". Hence Benin acquired a reputation for being the most unstable nation in Africa.

The present leadership of Benin, who came to power in October 1972, announced a programme of national development which proclaims, among other things, war on "tribalism" and foreign domination, the two sources of the country's backwardness and instability. The revolutionary government is seeking to reach its objectives by restructuring the country's social and economic life, setting up revolutionary bodies of people's power, and by consolidating the public sector in the economy, putting foreign capital under strict control.

As this programme was being implemented, a National Council of the Revolution was set up with a National Politbureau at its head. On the local level Revolutionary Councils and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution were instituted. In November 1974, a course was proclaimed towards a socialist orientation on the basis of the Popular Revolution Party of Benin, which adopted scientific communism as its ideology.

Under Benin's constitution, adopted on August 26, 1977, the legislative power is vested in the National Revolutionary Assembly, elected for three years. The President of the Republic is the Head of State and chairman of Benin's government — the National Executive Council. The latter is chosen for three years by the National Revolutionary Assembly on proposals from the Central Committee of the Party. The National Executive Council has absolute executive powers in the country. The President and Head of State is now Mathieu Kerekou who is also chairman of the Central Committee of the Party.

Trade unions operate within a single centre called the National Union of Working People. There are also united youth, women's and other public organisations.

Benin is a backward agrarian country with 90 per cent of its population working in agriculture, the country's economic backbone, which accounts for over 50 per cent of the GNP. Most farms are self-sufficient and depend little, if at all, on sales or purchases. They use primitive methods of farming. Apart from the produce grown for local consumption – manioc, yams and maize – the staple crops include palm oil, cotton and groundnuts which are mostly exported.

The revolutionary government of Benin is taking radical steps to boost agriculture. One of these is the agrarian reform whose main aim is to establish a network of co-operatives based on collective land tenure and also distribute incomes according to the work put in by the individual farmer. The Benin authorities do not press collectivisation on the farmers, but take account of regional and provincial differences. This is why the first experimental co-operatives appeared in the sparsely populated North with its vast tracts of unused land. The government helps co-operatives by supplying them with machines, grains, fertilisers and pesticides, and by sending specialists. It has set up state and joint private-state government companies to grow crops such as ground nuts, palm oil and rice.

Industry, which accounts for only 9 per cent of the GNP, mostly processes agricultural produce. There is a textile industry, several ginning factories, dairies, a cement works and a motor vehicle assembly plant. All major industrial and trade enterprises have been nationalised. The state holds a monopoly of foreign trade, finance and transport.

The Republic of Benin trades actively, mostly through the port of Cotonou, the biggest in the Gulf of Guinea. The Cotonou port also handles merchandise for Niger and neighbouring Nigeria, whose main port, Lagos, is overstrained. Benin's biggest trading partners are France and the Federal Republic of Germany. Links with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are expanding, with Benin selling them its traditional exports in exchange for industrial manufactures, foodstuffs and other products. The country has a railway line 635km long. The overall length of roads is 7,000 km of which 750 km are asphalted.

In foreign affairs Benin favours non-alignment and co-operation with all countries, regardless of their social system. It is a member of the OAU and many other African organisations and associations. It maintains friendly links with the socialist countries, is an ardent champion of detente, and opposes imperialist and neo-colonialist intrigues in Africa Like other progressive forces in Africa, Benin works for the eradication of the last pockets of racism in Southern Africa and for the independence of

the peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Since its independence Benin has maintained friendly relations with the Soviet Union. These have increased and become even more rewarding and constructive since the present government came to power. The two countries have signed a number of agreements to co-operate in culture, trade, science and technology. There is a regular exchange of visits and delegations at different levels. Scores of students from Benin are educated in the Soviet Union.

The choice of the socialist orientation, the course towards increased friendly relations, and the growing mutually advantageous co-operation with the socialist countries create favourable conditions for the people of Benin to progress towards social and economic reforms, to strengthen their independence and to consolidate their economic freedom.

BOOK REVIEWS

LIFE STYLES AND LIBERATION

For the Liberation of Nigeria — Essays and Lectures 1969-1978. By Yusufu Bala Usman. New Beacon Books Ltd. London: Port of Spain 1979. 292 pp.

Africa no less than the rest of the world is living through the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Fundamentally, all major political, economic, military and other battles that are taking place on our continent relate to this historic process.

It is the great strength of this book under review that it shows in a very direct and liberating way how the great issues facing the peoples of Africa form part of this contention between capitalism and socialism.

This book is about Nigeria and more specifically about the way forward for Nigeria. Early on in the book, in a lecture delivered in 1977, the author says:

> The present Nigerian regime has taken some steps to deal with corruption, ostentation and indiscipline in this country . . . The fact that these policies have

not succeeded in seriously tackling corruption, ostentation and indiscipline should lead us into a more thorough examination of our society and the world and not a retreat into romanticism and the refusal to see that our society is now fundamentally and viciously capitalist and *the only way forward is out of it*. p.64 (Our emphasis: Y.C.)

This constitutes Usman's basic thesis — to achieve the liberation of Nigeria the only way forward is socialism. He says the dominant class in Nigeria is the bourgeoisie. To quote him:

> In Nigeria today the system of production is controlled by western capitalists directly and also through their Nigerian intermediaries. These capitalists and their intermediaries constitute an obstacle to increased production because they corner most of the surplus and send it to the metropolis of capitalism or squander it on luxury and other useless ways here (in Nigeria). The reason for the impoverishment of our people is not poor technology or literacy. These are symptoms of the more fundamental fact of the nature of the system of production in this country. This system is geared to the extraction of the wealth of our people to sustain the metropolitan centres of the capitalist system, where an increasing number of the Nigerian agents of this system are hoarding wealth, buying houses and now whole villages! The life style of this Nigerian intermediary class — the fat foreign bank accounts, limousines, spraying, champagne, polo, lace, European houses and vacations etc etc — are a reflection of the nature of this system and cannot be changed unless the system is eliminated. (p 62).

Usman's discussion of this and other issues centres on Nigeria, as we have said. Yet what he says is of relevance to the rest of Africa as well. This arises from the objective fact of the shared experience among the peoples of Africa of imperialist domination and exploitation in both its direct colonial and indirect neo-colonialist forms.

In part, by virtue of its size, Nigeria also provides us with magnified examples of all the ills that afflict the peoples of independent Africa. Knowledge of Nigeria thus helps every student of African reality to understand more clearly what may in another country be visible only in a muted or hazy form.

Take for instance the symptomatic issue which Usman refers to as "ostentation". In the last quotation cited above, Usman gives some of the examples of this ostentatious living, such as the purchase in Europe for clothing the rich of lace materials worth anything up to US $1000 a metre.

So crassly provocative did the style of the intermediaries of imperialism become in Nigeria that during 1977 the government had to ban the importation of such luxury goods as lace, champagne and big cars. The then Head of State, General Obasanjo, stated explicitly that the ostentatious life style of the rich was serving to provoke the working people

to adopt revolutionary positions. To save the rich from themselves, the Obasanjo regime, as Usman reports in this book, therefore took steps to deal with "corruption, ostentation and indiscipline."

Usman draws attention to such issues, not to pass moral judgements, but to expose the role of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and to substantiate his thesis that only when state power is in the hands of genuinely patriotic forces, including the workers, peasants, the democratic intelligentsia etc., will Nigeria be able to solve her burning problems.

Throughout the book he treats an extensive variety of these problems from a class point of view, tackling such questions as transnational companies and national development, alternative models for Nigeria's political development, the constitution and class struggle, the national question in Nigeria, the position and role of the intelligentsia, the role of the mass media, religion, Nigeria's foreign relations, the lessons that the new Angola and Mozambique hold for Nigeria and so on.

As befits a revolutionary activist, Usman is not content to stop at analysis and exposure. In the 30 articles and lectures that comprise this book, he also enunciates immediate demands aimed at improving the lives of the ordinary people of Nigeria and limiting the plunder of the country by imperialism and its agents.

In one or two remarks in the book, Usman betrays insufficient understanding of the role of the Soviet Union, especially in world politics. At one point he accuses "the Russians" of using the UN together with the USA "as a meeting place where (they) work out their sordid deals and pass them out as 'international opinion'." (p 255). Usman must increase his understanding of the role of the Soviet Union, accept the Soviet Union as the true friend and natural ally of the liberation movements and of all anti-imperialist forces.

In a lecture to members of the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps in 1975, Usman said, inter alia:

> Do not be afraid or ashamed of being theoretical, as long as you are coherent and guided by patriotic commitment. You will make mistakes but you can learn, if you are genuinely committed.

This book is committed to the liberation of Nigeria and Africa. It contains much information on the contemporary problems of Nigeria and has many theoretical insights. If the author makes mistakes here and there, it seems clear that he will learn. For the moment, there is much that we can learn from this attractively and militantly written book in the common struggle for a genuinely liberated African continent. Y.C.

A POLITICAL INDICTMENT

A Dry White Season by Andre Brink. Published by W.H. Allen, £5.95.

Andre Brink has followed up his *Rumours of Rain* (the novel partly based on the Bram Fischer story, reviewed in *The African Communist* No. 76, First Quarter 1979) with a novel which contains his most forceful political statement to date. *A Dry White Season* is a searing exposure of the methods of the South African security police in dealing with political detainees, the torture and the killings, the sadism and brutality, the evasions and the cover-ups on which world attention was most firmly focussed following the death of Steve Biko. Fifty political prisoners had already died at the hands of the security police before Steve Biko was transported naked in the back of an open lorry from Port Elizabeth to his death cell in Pretoria. One has died since — one that we know of, because there may be others which have been successfully hidden from public view. Many mothers are still searching for their children taken from their homes at dead of night and never heard of again.

The plot of *A Dry White Season* is straightforward and stark. The opening paragraph records the death of Gordon Ngubene, the black cleaner at the school where Ben du Toit taught history and geography to the senior classes. Gordon died because he had been too persistent in attempting to find out how his son Jonathan, a schoolboy, had died after being picked up by the police in one of the 1976 Soweto disturbances. And at the end of the novel Ben du Toit is killed in mysterious circumstances because he has been too persistent in trying to find out how Gordon himself had died after his arrest by the security police.

With the assistance of an improbable woman journalist with whom he has a flitting affair, and an equally improbable African taxi-driver who fills the role of a black pimpernel, Ben du Toit unravels the whole sordid story. Andre Brink has done his homework. He has read the evidence about Biko, Mdluli, Imam Haron, Mohapi, and all the other victims of security police savagery, and he has left nothing out of the record. To members of the liberation movement his novel will prove no revelation. We have known and written about these things. Some of us have passed through the hands of the police torturers and still bear the scars. It is our own friends and comrades who have died.

But to Brink and his characters, what is brought to light is horrifying and unbelievable, yet it must be believed and communicated because it is true. As he pursues his lonely path of investigation, Ben du Toit comes up against, not only the hostility of the police, but also the suspicion and alienation of his friends and colleagues, even of his own family. In the end he is very much on his own, driven by his conscience to an end which seems preordained and inevitable.

Ben du Toit had been brought up as a decent God-fearing Afrikaner, but he no longer knows who "my own people" are. What about the "others"? The Jewish shopkeeper, the English chemist; those who found a natural habitat in the city. And the blacks.

The killing and the torture had been caused by "my people". But, Ben du Toit asks, "who are 'my people' today? To whom do I owe my loyalty? There must be someone, something. Or is one totally alone on that bare veld beside the name of a non-existent station?"

Ben du Toit's last words are that he knows death will overtake him but he has no regrets. "The only satisfaction I can still hope for is that everything will not end here with me". Yet he gives no indication of how his protest can be carried further. Throughout he has acted as an individual, followed his individual conscience, died as an individual. The notion of collective political action to resist and defeat the apartheid tyranny never enters his mind. He dies a martyr to his conscience, not a cause.

This is, of course, the typical bourgeois liberal dilemma. Because the vital question is to keep faith with himself, to fulfil his personal destiny, the political problem is never stated. And the Publications Appeal Board which lifted the original ban on this book in South Afrian was probably correct when it gave as one of its reasons: "Even the revolutionary or potential revolutionary who reads the book is unlikely to be strengthened in his views".

One might even agree with the Appeal Board's criticism of the novel for "the frequent superficial characterisation and the stereotyped descriptions". This is not Andre Brink's best novel, and rarely rises above the level of good journalism. Nevertheless, the Appeal Board is wrong when it says: "The probability that the book would influence the average reader in any way is minimal". *A Dry White Season* will shock the average reader who has hitherto believed without question that everything in South Africa is for the best and that all the stories about the security police are lies spread by communists and traitors.

Andre Brink has made a statement which cannot be ignored, and it is to

be hoped that at least some of those who read it will give the lie to the Publications Appeal Board and join or support the revolutionary movement which offers the only effective answer to the tyranny he detests.

Z.N.

THE SOWETO REVOLT

Year of Fire, Year of Ash. The Soweto Revolt: Roots of a revolution? By Baruch Hirson. (Zed Press 1979)

This book, although it came out three years after the Soweto uprisings, offers valuable documentary evidence about the history and details of the causes and effects of this great uprising.

The first three chapters give the historical background of the thinking behind the whole philosophy of Bantu Education. The reader is left with no doubt about the foundation and evolving process of African Education since the colonisation of South Africa. The roles of both British imperialism and the missionaries in laying this foundation are clearly exposed. The other important factor in this period brought out by the author is the militant opposition by the African people to the inferior form and content of "their" education. Our people have long understood the intentions of the colonial forces in the shaping of their education.

Since then our people have not only opposed these education policies and their implementation but have always offered an alternative policy of education based on a democratic foundation. In their view it is the duty of the state to finance the education of all the people — that fight is still on and gaining momentum as the struggle intensifies. The book also brings out clearly that the battles fought against the education policies of succcessive governments were not isolated ones but were linked up with all forms of resistance against the machinery of white domination. The historical facts concerning these mass resistances of the African people are a welcome corrective to the claims of those divisive elements who are preaching the reactionary gospel of student vanguardism.

The fallacy of this thinking is also clearly exposed in the author's analysis of the history and role of the black conscious students' forces. This movement of Black Consciousness is clearly and correctly analysed by the

author, except that he fails to understand its origins and the conditions in which it developed.

He attacks the Black Consciousness Movement for not making a Marxist analysis of the South African situation, which is an indication that he has not appreciated it as the first and necessary stage towards a higher political and ideological understanding of the complexities of the South African revolution. Although one does not want to cover up or justify the weaknesses of the Black Consciousness Movement, nevertheless to attack it for its failure to make a class analysis smacks of left extremism and idealism. The development of social and class consciousness has its foundation in the concrete objective factors prevailing at the time and not in the wishes of those who think they are more advanced than the masses.

On the uprisings in Soweto and other parts of the country from June 16, 1976 to late 1977, the author gives a well researched and detailed account of the developments. The section covers all the factors that were in play and clearly shows the varying battle formations adopted on all fronts for a united common assault on all symbols and bastions of apartheid. The section also shows the correctness and effectiveness of the combination of legal and illegal methods of struggle.

The role of our liberation movement, headed by the African National Congress, also comes out clearly in that countrywide theatre of struggle (although the author expresses some "misgivings" about this). It is important to note at this stage that the author makes only a token reference to the involvement of our Party in these struggles and ignores also our strategy and tactics towards the South African revolution and our documents and pamphlets analysing the Soweto uprisings and pointing the way forward.

Despite some theoretical weaknesses which appear to be based on Trotsky's theories of revolution, the book offers valuable documentary evidence and data on the causes and effects of the Soweto revolt and can be recommended for those wanting more information about this great uprising.

N.K.

WHO DOES BUTHELEZI SPEAK FOR?

From Comrade X, Kwamashu Township, Durban:

Dear Comrade,

We are still going on here in South Africa. I would like to draw your attention to some of the things worrying us here in the outskirts of Durban in Kwazulu Bantustan. Here there are people serving in the Council under the administration led by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi. Most of them are rich people who own business, some are chiefs from different regions.

In this Council there are learned chiefs, who are appointed without the concern of the people i.e. workers, peasants, students. We only hear afterwards that chief so-and-so is the member of the Kwazulu Administrative Council.

Here, where I live at Maqadini/Ndwedwe, there is Chief Mzonjani Ngcobo. They say he is responsible for roads. Ever since he was appointed to this position, the only thing he wants from us is money — tax for the right to live in the reserve, for the dogs, for his house and so on. The region under him has a population of 50,000. Poll tax is male adults-R15, female-R2. Tax for the Kwazulu administration is R5 p.a. and respectively for Inkatha KaZulu-R10, for dogs-R15, for the right to live in the reserve-R10.

Without receipts testifying to the fact that you have paid all taxes, you may not be employed in the white areas. It does not matter even if you have got permission from the employer, signed by the Labour Bureau in Durban. You are simply told that you should get this money. But in the reserves there is no food, children want school fees, books, school uniform, there is no work, people are turned out of work, even those who have work are not sure of their future because the bosses are fanatically strict. If you are late by 5 minutes you are expelled from work.

Thousands are looking for work in and around Durban. Those who had a few buses to run or shops are kicked out by the Bantu Investment Corporation. We are now like animals. If you happen to be late in catching the right train or bus at the end of the week going home you are likely to lose the few cents you have earned before you arrive home.

Comrades, in this reserve of Kwazulu we are forced to join Inkatha ye Nkululeko yesizwe. You should have Dom pass of Kwazulu. If you want to marry being not the member of Inkatha or without the Kwazulu Dom pass, you are asked why you don't have the pass or join Inkatha. Buthelezi forces our people to accept the existing state of affairs in our country.

What annoys us most is that the uniform he uses together with his followers is that of ANC before it was banned in 1960. Comrade, I request you to explain to us here in Durban — *Who is Buthelezi and his Inkatha?* Why, because most of us are lost now. Buthelezi says he does not want the same "independence" as has been granted to Transkei, Boputhatswana and Venda. He says he wants genuine independence. But his capital at Ulundi, presented to him by the Pretoria government, has been completed, his flag has the ANC colours, and a red one- which he says is for the fallen martyrs in the struggle against the white men and is for peace.

We oppressed Africans in South Africa know the African National Congress of South Africa, the Communist Party and Umkhonto We Sizwe, armed for the liberation struggle of the oppressed people in our country. Just now all the ANC and Party leaders are in jail, even some of us who value freedom are trailed by Special Branch agents. All over, at schools, work, in the countryside such agents are just teeming like hosts.

We, workers, peasants, students support the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front, Namibian SWAPO. Their triumph will quicken the day of our freedom.

Please comrade, tell our people about *these Bantustans, particularly this one of Buthelezi.* Buthelezi and his followers have no shame, they live in palaces, whilst we live in terrible houses built of zink or planks, which are

not fit to be called houses. We are packed like sardines in buses whilst Buthelezi and the like enjoy driving Mercedes Benzes. His slogan is, "Power to the people. We will win if we are one". This is true, but the power is theirs at present — the Muzorewas of South Africa.

Yours, hungry for knowledge
Comrade X

CHINA'S ROLE OF SABOTAGE

From Spider, Maputo.

It is with great dismay that we notice that the once mighty progressive China is unable to approach certain delicate world problems without aggravating the situation.

When the Soviet forces moved into Afghanistan for the purpose of defending the people's independence after the internal reactionaries and imperialist agents made desperate attempts to rape the people's revolutionary gains, China, as usual, spoke and acted in the interests of imperialism. No doubt she pleased the reactionary world, most particularly America and Mama Thatcher's British imperialism.

The Soviet forces moved into Afghanistan after a request was made by the People's Government of that country. So the Chinese claims and cries about the so-called Russian oppression and Russian imperialism are nonsense and preposterous.

The world must remember that the Soviet Union delayed in responding to the request of the patriotic Afghanistanis, but because the situation was worsening day by day, they had no option but to act immediately at that stage. And they did so in the interest of the Afghanistanis themselves as well as the Soviet people and the cause of socialism.

The move by the Soviet Union was justified. Any country has the right to seek assistance from any other country they deem as a friend during difficult trying times, when their sovereignty and economy are being threatened by military aggression and sabotage.

It would have been criminal for the Soviet Union to stand idly by when imperialism was making a desperate attempt to rape the people's gains.

People's China is now exposed as a reactionary regime that poses dangers to the whole development of socialism. China pretends to be a friend of the liberation movement, but its proteges are CIA agents and enemies of socialism like Holden Roberto and Savimbi. And what socialist country can hobnob with Pinochet's Chile? On the other hand when you look around and count the countries that got their independence with the help of the Soviet Union, you can mention countries like Vietnam, Algeria, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and many more. Even China itself was liberated with the help of the Soviet Union.

STATEMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

The Central Committee of the South African Communist Party expresses its full solidarity with the Afghanistan People's Democratic Party and the people of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in their determined and all-out efforts to defend the gains of the April 1978 Revolution for the elimination of feudalism, for national independence and social progress on the road to socialism.

The events in Afghanistan must be seen against the background of the frantic campaign by imperialism to shore up the remaining bastions of capitalism throughout the world and to hold back the forces of change. Now they talk of "Soviet aggression against a neighbouring country". But the truth of the matter is that on December 28. 1979. Radio Kabul transmitted the following message:

> "The Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, taking into account the continuing and broadening interference and provocations of external enemies of Afghanistan, and with a view to defending the gains of the April Revolution, territorial integrity, national independence and maintaining peace and security, proceeding

from the treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness and co-operation of December 5, 1978, approached the USSR with the insistent request that it give urgent political, moral and economic aid, including military aid."

To us it comes as no surprise that the Soviet Union has met the request of the Afghan side.

For years now the imperialists have been concentrating their strategy for a counter-revolutionary revival, leading to increaisng confrontation with the Soviet Union and ultimately the threat of nuclear war. When the Soviet Union has taken the lead in proposing measures of detente and disarmament, the imperialists have resorted to delaying tactics and both secret and open rearmament. The ratification of SALT 2 has been repeatedly deferred, and now once again the Carter regime has used the excuse of Afghanistan to withdraw it from the consideration of the Senate. When the Soviet Union unilaterally withdraw 20,000 men and 1,000 tanks from the German Democratic Republic, the imperialist response was a NATO decision to deploy hundreds of new atomic weapons throughout Western Europe and threats of nuclear war against the Soviet Union from Mrs Thatcher and her allies.

The Iranian revolution was followed by the dispatch of American naval forces to the Persian Gulf and the threat of military action to secure the oil wells of the Middle East for the West. Hatred of the Soviet Union has united China with the imperialists and opened the way to massive military and economic aid to China as an ally of imperialism against the world revolutionary movement.

Step by step hatred of the Soviet Union is being deliberately fanned by the Governments and media in the imperialist countries, whose people are being brainwashed to regard the Soviet Union as an enemy, and conditioned to accept that war against the Soviet Union is inevitable and intervention to stop the spread of socialism desirable.

The hypocrisy of the imperialists is exposed by the fact that aggression perpetuated by themselves or their allies against the forces of progress and democracy throughout the world are passed over in silence. China's brazen invasion of Vietnam was accompanied, not by the threat of sanctions, but by a frenzied rush of Western businessmen to negotiate trade deals with Peking. French invasions in Africa and continued occupation of African territories are ignored.

Imperialism's global strategy is of particular concern to us in South Africa. We have already witnessed the collusion of Britain with the racists

of South Africa and Rhodesia in a bid to impose a neo-colonialist settlement on Zimbabwe, and similar attempts are being made to frustrate the liberation movement in Namibia. Mrs Thatcher herself has confirmed that the aim of these exercises is "to make progress towards an ending of the isolation of South Africa in world affairs." The alliance between Israel and South Africa as the main bastions of imperialism in the Middle East and Africa is being cemented ever more strongly.

The present tactic of the industrial-military complex in the imperialist countries is to keep the economy going by massive expenditure on armaments, and the vicious anti-Soviet campaign is designed to make this acceptable to the masses at a time when their social services are being cut to the bone. The danger, inevitably, is that preparations for war can so easily spill over into open conflict — a conflict from which the human race is unlikely to survive.

It is in this context that we interpret the events in Afghanistan. We appreciate that it is for the people of Afghanistan to decide for themselves the nature of their social system, but ever since the April 1978 Revolution the imperialists have refused to leave them to settle their own affairs and have strained every nerve to turn the clock back. In the dangerous situation which has developed in the region, with both America and China threatening, and indeed either directly or indirectly or through surrogates, actually waging war, the Soviet Union had every right to respond to the appeal of the Afghan Government to help defend their revolution.

The South African Communist Party declares its full understanding of and support for the Soviet action, and calls upon progressive forces throughout the world to resist all anti-Soviet pressures and consolidate the ranks of the anti-imperialist forces in the struggle for the new and better world order for which we are all fighting.

We appeal to our people at home to demonstrate their solidarity with the people of Afghanistan; we appeal to the international communist movement and progressive forces to defend the Afghan Revolution, to expose imperialist machinations and to support the fraternal act of solidarity which the Soviet Union renders to the Afghan people.

Issued on behalf of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party by Dr Y. Dadoo, national chairman.

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